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LETTERS

ON

THE SACRAMENT

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

BY SAMUEL BAYARD, Esq.

A Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Congregation at Princeton, New Jersey.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM W. WOODWARD,

No. 52, South-West Corner of Chesnut

and Second Streets.

1822.

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"Letters on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. By Samuel Bayard, Esq. A Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Congregation at Princeton, New Jersey."

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D. CALDWELL.
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

CONTENTS.

LETTER I. Obstacles to making an open profession of Christianity, by participating of the Lord's Supper—Scruples on this subject ostensibly not groundless.—The apostle Peter's sentiments respecting some passages in St. Paul's Epistles.—The necessity of enquiry and illustration

LETTER II. The solemnity of this ordinance—held in the highest reverence by the great body of professing Christians. Its importance in the estimation of primitive believers. Although not essential to salvation, yet great guilt may be incurred by the neglect of it, under special circumstances. Archbishop Newcombe's opinion on moral obligation.

LETTER III. Whether the will of God in regard to this ordinance is clearly announced. The first institution of the Lord's Supper as recorded by three Evangelists, and the apostle Paul. This ordinance intended to be a perpetual memorial of our Lord's death. This doctrine maintained by almost every denomination of Christians, since the first age of the Church.

LETTER IV. The origin of this ordinance, divine. Our Lord's injunction respecting it, imperative. Our obligations to obey him as our Creator,—Supreme Legislator—Redeemer—Preserver—and as our final Judge.

LETTER V. Other grounds of obligation—the infinite love and condescension of the Saviour—our own happiness.—This subject illustrated by the relations of social life. The opinion of Socrates respecting the appearance of Virtue in a human form. Perfect excellence *has* appeared in the person of Jesus Christ—how received—the happiness that would result from obeying all his commands and following his example.

LETTER VI. The circumstances in which this ordinance was instituted.—The Saviour's charge—"Do this in remembrance of me,"—The command easy, and deserves universal obedience.

LETTER VII. Christians in the first age of the Church observed this ordinance with delight. A picture of their mutual attachment, and the manner in which they celebrated the Lord's Supper. Their conduct worthy of imitation.

LETTER VIII. Objections to receiving this ordinance—want of due preparation—this difficulty removed.—Perfection not attainable in the present state The deceitfulness of the human heart. The duty of making an open profession of our faith. The consequence of denying Jesus Christ before men.

LETTER IX. Other objections urged against partaking of the Lord's Supper—The 27th and 29th verses of the 11th

chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians explained. The Greek word KRIMA incorrectly translated by the word DAMNATION. Extracts from Drs. Macknight, Doddridge, Campbell, Bishop of Lincoln, and Mr. Stackhouse, in relation to this terrifying word.

LETTER X. The same subject continued. Illustrations from the Bishop of Lincoln's Elements of Theology and from Mr. Stackhouse's Body of Divinity. Inference from these extracts.

LETTER XI. A passage from the 6th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, 4th, 5th, and 6th verses explained. Mr. Burkitt's comment on these—Mr. Stackhouse—Dr. Macknight—and Mr. Pearce.

LETTER XII. A third passage alarming to timid Christians, from St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, (chapter x. 26, 27.) explained. Mr. Burkitt's, Dr Doddridge's, and Dr. Macknight's observations on this passage.

LETTER XIII. The nature of the unpardonable sin explained—shown to consist in imputing to the influence of Satan, those miracles that were performed by the power of the Holy Spirit—Dr. Doddridge's opinion on this subject—Mr. Burkitt's.

LETTER XIV. On the several descriptions of persons who ought not to be admitted to this ordinance—Infidels—the openly vicious—the very ignorant—persons having secular views only—wavering and nominal Christians—persons denying the Atonement and the Divinity of our Lord;—and those who deny the necessity of the Sacraments altogether.

LETTER XV. General scruples suggested and removed. Perfection of character not indispensable to the participation of this ordinance—we should come as we are. There is no mere human character on the sacred records, altogether faultless. The indispensable qualifications, faith, repentance, a sincere and honest heart. Professor Osterwald's, Bishop Gibson's, Mr. Stackhouse's sentiments on this matter. Westminster Catechism.

LETTER XVI. Further difficulties suggested—Ignorance of the nature and origin of this ordinance. An attempt to explain these—The figurative expressions of our Lord quoted, and illustrated.—Mr. Clowe's explanation of this subject.

LETTER XVII. An historical review of the circumstances that led to the institution of the Passover. This rite intended to be a perpetual memorial of the delivery of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage—the manner of its celebration—ancient as well as modern.

LETTER XVIII. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be considered as the Christian Passover—Referred to, in this light, by the apostles. Several strong points of resem-

blance between the two institutions. In point of simplicity, and in the importance of the object designated, the advantage greatly in favour of the Christian ordinance. Why styled the *Lord's Supper*—why a *Sacrament*—why *the Communion*—the *sign* or *seal* of a *covenant*.

LETTER XIX. The nature and design of the Lord's Supper further illustrated. How represented by Theologians of different denominations. The origin of sacrifices—their universal prevalence—their object. A manuscript letter of Dr. Boudinot, on the subject.

LETTER XX. The subject of Sacrifice and atonement further considered. Ancient Prophecies respecting the expiatory Sacrifice of Christ. The nature and efficacy of this Sacrifice. If this view of Scripture be not correct, there is no dependance on language as a medium of thought. Quotations from Scripture in proof of this doctrine.

LETTER XXI. On the necessity of the Lord's Supper—the suitableness of the emblems employed in its celebration. The power of sympathy—the symbols used are significant—not costly—every where attainable—not intended to refresh the body—but through the senses to confirm our faith. The injunction of a beloved friend held sacred—how much more, that of the Lord Jesus Christ. In celebrating this ordinance, his promise of a resurrection should be recalled. Extracts from Dr. M'Claine and Mr. Logan on this subject.

LETTER XXII. The benefits of the Lord's Supper considered—It does not effect the present remission of sin.—Mr. Knox's sentiments on this subject. It is usually considered by Protestant Churches only as a memorial. The Brazen Serpent, a test of faith. The Sacrament a mean for increasing faith, and repentance—promotes affection among christians, and tends to extinguish revenge, hatred, &c.

LETTER XXIII. The same subject continued. Other benefits of this Sacrament—It gives a decided cast to the character—It tends to remove remorse of conscience. It consoles the mind under affliction, and prepares the true believer for the close of life.

LETTER XXIV. On the duties to be observed prior to an admission to the Lord's Supper—Self-examination—The qualifications according to the Westminster Shorter Catechism—according to that of the Reformed Dutch Church—to that of the Protestant Episcopal Church. M. Mallet—Mrs. H. Moore—M. Huet.—Questions, that every Christian should put to himself prior to partaking of this ordinance. This duty never to be omitted. Its advantages.

LETTER XXV. Duties incumbent on professing Christians *at* the Lord's Table—Meditations appropriate to such an occasion. On the love of God. The gift of the Holy Spirit. Review of the various dispensations, Adamic—

Mosaic—Prophetic. The advent of the Saviour. His Life—Sufferings—Death—Resurrection—his coming to Judgment—the closing scene of the Universe. The improvement to be made of this review. Supplication for ourselves—and our friends—Anticipation of Death and of Heaven.

LETTER XXVI. Duties subsequent to a participation of the Lord's Supper. The Oath of fidelity exacted from Roman Soldiers. Christians are Soldiers of the Cross—They aver attachment and fidelity to their Lord—Whether there is any test of having partaken worthily of this ordinance.—What are the genuine fruits of a good profession. No desertion in the Christian warfare without disgrace. We are not to remain stationary. Of the renewed obligations to duty after communion.—Sentiments of pious authors on this subject.

LETTER XXVII. This subject pursued. Sentiments of Mr. Stackhouse—Reading the Scriptures—M. Durand.—Reflection on what we read—Prayer—Some thoughts and directions on this subject.

LETTER XXVIII. The subject resumed. The necessity of adding watchfulness to prayer.—The nature and benefits of this duty. The character of our associations.—*Conformity* to the world—It is very different now, from what it was among primitive believers.—Professing christians often led away by temptation—Cautions in the Scriptures—rules for the regulation of life.—The enervating influence of sensual pleasures—the evils of dissipation—The example of Jesus Christ.—Extreme abstinence and seclusion to be avoided—Innocent pleasures not to be forbidden. Dr. Newcombe's remarks on the subject.

LETTER XXIX. On the benefits and consolations attending the worthy celebration of this ordinance—The advantages of religion in the *present* life—It forbids what is injurious to happiness here—restrains evil passions,—enjoins what is good,—secures the esteem of the wise and virtuous,—makes wealth a blessing,—promotes peace of mind,—animates hope,—and enlarges charity, &c.—Its influence on futurity—It makes the close of life delightful,—by the assured prospect—of endless happiness hereafter.

LETTER XXX. A short recapitulation of the substance of the preceding letters—What are the leading features of the gospel—Its *design*—It has brought life and immortality to light—a sketch of the Pagan world, at the time of our Lord's advent—Of the Jewish nation—their œconomy, apparently temporal.—Jesus Christ the moral *light* of the world,—the only sacrifice for sin. The *excellence* of christianity—Its doctrines—its precepts—the example of its founder—Its influence in sickness—adversity, and at the close of life—Were it but a delusion—yet it should be indulged—a sentiment of Cicero—A short Address, and Doxology.

INTRODUCTION.

The following letters are intended, not for the information of the learned, but for the assistance of *plain* serious christians.—They are designed to assist persons whose piety is associated with that tenderness of conscience which deters them from coming to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by suggesting scruples that have no just foundation in the sacred Scriptures. Persons of this character, whose reading has been almost exclusively confined to the Bible, and to a few books of a practical nature; are often led into a misapprehension of the true meaning of some difficult passages in the sacred volume, from not having access to the means of correct information. They are perhaps anxious to conform to an acknowledged duty; but think it safer to abstain, than to encounter the perils which they apprehend from an unworthy participation of this sacred ordinance. To relieve minds of this description, from scruples, at once painful and unfounded, was the chief motive that led to the composition of the following letters.

But this is not the whole that has been here attempted. The investigation of the true meaning of certain passages in the Epistles of St. Paul, has led to a statement of the obligations which should influence all *true* believers,

to obey the injunction of our Lord in coming to this ordinance.—It has led also to a designation of several classes of persons, whose principles or deportment, do, or ought to exclude them from this feast of love. A view is then taken of the nature and design of this sacrament, and some observations added on the duties it exacts,—the benefits it confers, and the consolations it is calculated to produce.

Such is the aim of the following work.—Should it have the effect of dissipating the doubts and scruples even of a small number of pious, but timid believers;—should it but in a *few* instances, serve to enlighten and edify intelligent and devout, though unlearned readers; it will amply repay the research and labour it has occasioned.

Nor let it be deemed presumptuous in a *layman* to undertake a task which many may be disposed to think belongs exclusively to professed Theologians.—Had the work been intended only for Professors or Students of theology, this objection would have been just and valid;—but as it is designed for the use of classes of christians who have neither the means of obtaining that diversified knowledge which lies scattered over the pages of learned commentators,—nor leisure, from the necessary business of life, to remove their doubts; this circumstance it is hoped will apologize for the present undertaking.

There is however a better reason for such a work, than even the one now assigned. On the subject of religion, with many persons the

productions of laymen have more influence than those of clergymen. The one writes, they say, from professional interest or prejudice,—but the other, must write or speak on this subject from personal conviction,—or from sincere attachment to the cause.

An excellent writer in defence of revealed religion in speaking of Mr. Wilberforce's "*Practical View*," observes, "If we had a number of such able and faithful labourers in the cause of christianity, among the *laity*, much good might be expected to result from their endeavours.—Men of this description are peculiarly called upon in the present day,—when infidelity is making such rapid advances, to exert themselves *in every possible way*, to stop the torrent of iniquity, which is ready to bear down all before it."*

And elsewhere† he urges this point more warmly,—"Learned laymen especially," says he "should come forward in vindication of the gospel; since every thing which proceeds from the clergy on religion, is supposed to spring from a self-interested source. *Wilberforce* has done himself much honour. He is a bold and able advocate for a much injured cause. No less so, is *Mrs. Hannah Moore.* She is a credit to her sex, and a blessing to her country. *It is scarcely possible however, for authors on this subject, to be too numerous.* We are not wanting in *clerical* writers, but those who have treated on subjects purely religious, among

* Simpson's Plea for Religion, page 247. † Page 331.

other ranks of society, are comparatively few."

In accordance with the foregoing extract, from the Rev. Mr. Simpson's "Plea for Religion," are the following just and striking observations, taken from an excellent discourse, by the Rev. Dr. Green, late President of New Jersey College—In his sermon on "the unity of piety and science," he observes,

"But I fear I have referred too much to the *clergy*,—in what I have said. It is the union of science with piety in the *laity*, which often has an influence not less propitious in the promotion of religion, as well as in the concerns of civil society. Removed from all suspicion of professional motives,—of all zeal to support that, which supports himself; when a layman of genius and erudition, who is also, distinguished for piety, comes forward to plead the cause of religion; he does it with immense advantage."

"The fact itself, goes far to shut the mouth of infidelity. It can no longer utter the stale cry of "priestcraft;" or, "the man is following his trade, and writing for his bread." *One* secular man of great parts and learning, may, on this account serve the cause of Christ, beyond *many* in the sacred office. Who can estimate the *evils* that have been prevented, and the *good* which has resulted, from such men appearing on the side of religion, as Grotius and Boyle, and Hale and Selden, and Newton and Pascal, and Boerhave and Addison, and Euler, and Haller, and Johnson, and Bonnet,

and Beattie, and Jones, and the titled TEIGNMOUTH,—more truly enobled by his office and services, as President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, than if a *crown* had been added to his *coronet*."

"But in characters of far less eminence than these,—in common cases, where liberally minded, and liberally educated laymen, are noted for piety; their *example and influence*, are often inestimably precious. At the bar,—on the bench,—in the camp,—in the navy,—or in the compting-house; *they may do more good than many, who enter the sacred desk.* Thus it is especially, *to give effect*, to plans for the extension of religion and learning."

In Europe, *many* laymen, eminent for their piety and their learning, have already maintained the cause of revealed truth, with intelligence and zeal. In the United States, a very small number of this description have as yet arisen; since from colonists we became an united and independent nation.

But the time is fast approaching, when pious laymen, obtaining leisure by the accumulation of property, and emulous of the example of such men as Locke, of West, of Addison, of Wilberforce, or of Teignmouth, we trust will come forward, in defence of that system of revealed truth, which constitutes the chief happiness of the present life, and is the pledge of surer and higher felicity in the life to come.

Already in the ranks of sacred literature, we recognize the venerable names of a Boudinot, a Galloway, and a Thomson. Pursuing

their footsteps, may numbers of American laymen, regard it as their highest honour, to serve the cause of religion by their pen, as well as by their example; remembering that "they that "be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the "firmament; and they that turn many to righ- "teousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

PRINCETON, N. J. JULY 12th, 1822.

LETTER I.

JANUARY 1st, 1821.

My Dear Friend—

I sincerely sympathize with you in your present difficulties. That you have long cherished a desire to partake of the Lord's Supper—that you have felt it a duty to obey the solemn injunction of that Saviour who said "Do this in remembrance of me"—that you have anxiously sought by enquiry—by reading, and by prayer, to overcome those obstacles that have opposed your taking a place at the table of the Lord among his professed disciples, I have no reason to doubt. Still however you hesitate. You cannot come to the resolution of making a *public* profession of your faith, by a participation of those emblems which "show forth the death" of your ascended Saviour.—You postpone the discharge of this important duty, I know, not from any want of respect to the ordinance—not from contempt of the authority that enjoins it—nor from any doubt of its salutary influence on the temper and conduct of real christians; but from a diffidence of your own state—from a dread of "eating and drinking" *unworthily*—and thus of incurring greater guilt than by abstaining altogether from the

ordinance.—Your scruples *you say* are confirmed by the evident meaning of certain passages in the writings of an inspired apostle; and until your views on these subjects are changed you contend, that consistently with the light you *now* enjoy and the regard you owe to the dictates of conscience—you cannot venture publickly to array yourself under the banner of the cross.

I must acknowledge my dear friend that your scruples are not groundless.—That you should hesitate and consider well a subject that concerns your everlasting welfare—that you should cautiously enter on a path from which you cannot recede without injury to your character, and much personal suffering.—this is not a matter of surprise. And that you should misapprehend certain passages of scripture which for ages have been a stumbling block to multitudes of sincere but unenlightened christians is more a subject of regret, than of wonder.

The apostle Peter himself, speaking of some passages in the writings of the apostle Paul says "as also in all his epistles, speaking in "them of these things—in which are some "things *hard to be understood*—which they "that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as "they do also the other Scriptures, unto their "own destruction." (2 Pet. iii. 16.)

On a subject so interesting to your peace of mind you ask my assistance. It is a request that I cannot refuse, however imperfect my information, or however slender my qualifi-

cation for the task may be, I cannot decline contributing according to the measure of my ability, whatever may have a tendency to promote your spiritual welfare.—My hope and prayer is, that the seed although sown by an unskilful hand, may spring up in your own, and in the hearts of others, and may bear fruit, "some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some "thirty."

I am yours, &c.

S. B.

LETTER II.

My Dear Friend—

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is indeed a solemn rite: it has always been so regarded since its first institution. The primitive Christians considered it as a test of discipleship. For centuries after their Lord's ascension, they commemorated his sufferings and his love, in this sacred ordinance with the return of every Lord's day. It served to awaken their zeal, to confirm their faith, and to sustain their fortitude amidst the dangers that encompassed them; and in the prospect of those sufferings, and of that martyrdom, which at many periods was the inevitable consequence of a public profession of christianity. This ordi-

nance though rejected by some religious denominations, and too much neglected by individuals who call themselves christians, is still entitled to the highest veneration of all devout believers. But you enquire, "Is a participation of it *essential to salvation?* do "we forfeit heaven by refusing to partake of "this ordinance?" Assuredly not. It is no where asserted in the Scriptures that without such participation, we *cannot be saved.* Our Divine Legislator has not put this rite on the same footing with Repentance, Faith and Obedience. Yet unquestionably, great guilt may be incurred by refusing obedience to the command that enjoins it—"If any man love "me," says the Saviour, "he will keep my "commandments:"—The servant who *knew* his Lord's will, and did it not was to be beaten with *many* stripes. "Therefore" says the apostle James "to him that *knoweth* to do good "and doeth it *not*, to him, it is *sin.*" (James iv. 17.) We shall be judged without doubt according to the measure of light we have enjoyed. If but one talent have been confided to us, we shall not be required to account for the use of ten. If the love of "God manifest "in the flesh" so clearly set forth in this sacred institution, is often presented to our view, and if at the same time we have the oracles of truth in our hands to consult and study, if to these be added, public instruction from the authorized ministers of the gospel; and the opportunity of consulting able expounders of the Scripture, and if, notwith-

standing all these aids, we refuse to enquire into our duty, or to obey, when we have understood it;—can we persuade ourselves that we are altogether guiltless? I must confess there is some apology for those who sin through defect of light—or of understanding. The apostle Paul acknowledges that although "he "was a blasphemer and persecutor and injuri- "ous—yet that he obtained mercy, because "he did it *ignorantly* in unbelief." (1 Tim. i. 13.) But where an enjoined duty is neglected—or a known commandment is wilfully disobeyed, such disobedience obviously merits reprehension or punishment. Even to an earthly Parent or Magistrate, would not such a disposition be considered as clear evidence of a refractory spirit, and call for punishment at once prompt and effective.

And will any one cherish the sentiment, that because our Sovereign Legislator and Judge, is beyond our view, he knows not our thoughts or actions, and that he will not bring us into judgment for what we now do? Can we recognize his omniscience, and not feel persuaded that while he approves every act of faith and obedience, he will also mark with disapprobation every refusal of obedience to his commands—every instance of disrespect to his authority—and every act of hostility to his government. However merciful and gracious he may be, it is to the *penitent*, to the *humble*, and *obedient*, that his mercy is peculiarly promised.

Let no one then incur guilt by voluntarily

disobeying a *known command* of a *Divine Legislator*—"The will of God,"—says the learned and excellent "Archbishop Newcombe,* *externally declared* is a *sufficient ground of moral obligation to all his creatures,*" "because an all wise and absolutely perfect being can only will what is right. "A clear perception of duty must likewise induce an obligation on every intelligent being; for God has so framed all such that "they are a law to themselves, thus binding "them to a particular mode of conduct, which "is ultimately God's act and will, made known "in a different manner."

I remain truly yours.

LETTER III.

My Dear Friend—

The first great question then to be settled is—Has "the will of God been externally declared" in regard to this ordinance so as to leave no doubt of its being a divinely appointed institution.

To be fully satisfied on this subject, it is only necessary to have recourse to the account given of it, by three of the evangelists and by the

* See observations on our Lord as a Divine Instructor, page 33.

apostle Paul. St. Mathew, who was himself an eye witness of all that passed at the institution of this rite—after relating the manner in which our Lord celebrated the Jewish Passover with his disciples says, (ch. xxvi. 26.) "And as they "were eating, Jesus took bread and *blessed* "(God) and *brake* and gave to his disciples and "said—take—eat—this is my body—and he "took the cup and gave thanks and gave to "them—saying—drink ye all of it—for this "is my blood of the New Testament, or (cove- "nant) which is shed for many—for the re- "mission of sins."

St. Mark's account of the institution is in these words, "And as they did eat Jesus took "bread and blessed and brake—and gave to "them and said—take, eat—this is my body. "—And he took the cup, and when he had "given thanks, he gave to them, and they all "drank of it. And he said unto them this is "my blood of the New Testament (or cove- "nant) which is shed for many."

In St. Luke's gospel, the following account is given.—"And he (Jesus) took bread and "gave thanks—and brake—and gave to "them" saying "this is my body which is "given for you—this do in remembrance of "me—likewise also the cup after supper, say- "ing—this cup is the New Testament (or "covenant) in my blood which is shed for "you."—St. Paul's account of the institution is recorded in the xi. ch. of 1. Cor. v. 23. "For I have received of the Lord," says he, "that which also I delivered to you—that the

"Lord Jesus the same night in which he was "betrayed took bread, and when he had gvien "thanks he brake—and said, "take, eat, this "is my body which is broken for you—*this* "*do in remembrance of me.*"—after the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying "this cup is the New Testa- "ment (or covenant) in my blood—*this do ye* "*as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of* "*me.*"—"For," adds the apostle, "as often "as ye eat *this* bread, and drink *this* cup— "ye do show the Lord's *death* till he come."

After attentively comparing these several accounts of the first institution of the Lord's Supper, who can doubt of its divine original—who can resonably imagine that it was not intended as a *perpetual* memorial of the example—the precepts—the sufferings—but above all, of the *atoning death* of our blessed Redeemer.

It is true that two of the evangelists, (Matthew and Mark,) omit the injunction of our Lord—"This do in remembrance of me." But it is recorded by St. Luke whose gospel was composed several years after the publication of the two former—and who states in his preface that he had "a perfect understanding of "all things from the very first"—communicated to him by those "who from the begin- "ning was eye-witnesses of the word," And St. Paul who wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians about thirty years after the death of our Lord, and who received his knowledge of the institution, as he assures us, from the Lord

Jesus himself, repeats the injunction from the Saviour, as well after drinking wine, as of eating bread, in memory of him. The declaration of the apostle that "as *oft* as we eat *this* "bread and drink *this* cup we do show the "Lord's death till he come," evidently shows that the ordinance was not only administered to the Corinthians thirty years after the ascension of our Lord; but that it was intended that it should be continued to the end of time.

Let it not then be imagined that this ordinance was of a *temporary* nature, that our Lord's injunction was addressed to his *immediate* followers—and not to his disciples through the successive periods of time, till his second advent. I know that there is a very respectable denomination of Christians who maintain this doctrine—but with equal justice might they urge that *all* the divine commands—all the moral discourses—the instructive parables—and rich consolations addressed to his disciples at different times during his public ministry, were also intended only for his *immediate followers*. This is a conclusion they would reluctantly admit—neither will the great body of Christians of other denominations admit that from the very origin of Christianity to the present day, the believers in Divine Revelation, would almost with one consent have agreed to observe as a sacred institution, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, had they not been assured that it was a Divine appointment, and of perpetual obligation.

I am truly yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

My Dear Friend—

Having now come to the conclusion that this holy ordinance *is* of divine origin—and that the continuance of it was enjoined by our Lord as a memorial of his perfect example in life, and of his atoning death on the cross—the next important subject for our consideration is, the obligation under which his followers are laid, to obey his commands—"This do in remembrance of me"—is not a mere recommendation—it is not a matter of advice, which we are allowed to follow or reject, according to the suggestions of our own fancy, or the inclination of our own wills. It is imperative and obligatory on all who acknowledge themselves to be christians in *fact* as well in *name*.

To this injunction we owe a prompt obedience on various grounds—I. It is from *the Creator of the Universe*—"In the beginning" says St. John, "was the *Word*—and the *Word* "was with *God*—and the *Word* was *God*: all "things were made by him and without him "was not any thing made that was made"—(John chap. i. 1—3.)—The apostle Paul declares (Eph. iii. 9.) that "*God* created all "things by Jesus Christ"—"By whom also "he made the worlds"—(Heb. i. 2.) and the

same apostle more fully states. "For by him "(*Jesus Christ*) were all things created that "are in heaven and that are in earth, visible "and invisible, whether they be thrones or "dominions or principalities or powers—all "things were created by him and for him." (Coloss. i. 16.) 2. This command is from that *Supreme Legislator*, whose will is a rightful law to every created intelligence. "There is "one lawgiver" (or *Legislator* as in the French version) says the apostle James—"who is able "to save and to destroy," (James iv. 12.)

In the bosom of every rational being who has attained the age of moral agency, he has implanted the principle of *conscience*, which under the guidance of the understanding is a rule of action—"For"—says the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans, (chap. ii. 14, 15.) "when the Gentiles which have not the "law, do by nature the things contained in "the law, these having not the *law*, are *a law*, "*to themselves*—which shew the work of the "law written in their hearts; their *conscience* "also bearing witness, and their thoughts the "mean while accusing, or else excusing one "another."

But not willing to leave his creature man to the guidance of the *light of nature*, he mercifully through the agency of his servant Moses superadded the *moral law*, as contained in the ten commandments. In the writings of inspired men from the giving of the law at mount Sinai, until his advent on earth, he has added many illustrations of this moral code.

But while on earth he epitomized the commandments and reduced them to two plain injunctions—*Supreme love to God*, and a *just regard for our fellow creatures.*

On these two he declares—"hang all the "law and the prophets"—His commands and instructions while on earth—though delivered with infinite meekness and condescension—were delivered with *authority*—"The peo- "ple were astonished at his doctrine—for he "taught them as one having *authority*, and not "as the Scribes." (Matt. vii. 28, 29.)

When the gospel was first preached, its progress was rapid, but it was among "the poor "of this world—who were rich in faith." Centuries elapsed before its rules became the law of States or Kingdoms—Eventually, however, the "stone, cut out of the mountain without "hands brake in pieces" the great image composed of iron, brass, gold, silver and clay—subdued the immense Roman Empire—and has ever since been gradually—according to the sure word of prophecy, (Dan. ii. 35.) gaining new additions—till at length it shall "become "a great mountain and fill the whole earth."

Within a few years we have seen the Sovereigns of three of the most powerful nations of Europe, by a public and solemn Treaty, stipulating with each other to be governed in their future intercourse and relations with each other by the rules which our Lord as Supreme Legislator has prescribed in his gospel.

3. But it is not merely in our relations to him as our *Creator* and *Supreme Lawgiver*

that we owe him respect and obedience—Our obligations are increased from our relations to him as our *Preserver and Redeemer*. He not only has given us existence: to most of our race he has made that existence a blessing. He has endowed us with rational faculties—given us wisdom above the brutes that perish.—He has made us but a little lower than the angels.—He has made all nature "beauty to the "eye and music to the ear"—He supplies us with our daily food, our raiment—our shelter and our friends—The light that cheers us—the air that refreshes—the fruits that nourish us—all are *his* gift and to *him* are we indebted for presentb lessings, and for every hope that irradiates the path of life.

But our obligations do not end here. He has *higher* claims to our love and our obedience. He is our *Redeemer* from the guilt and misery of sin—He has "bought us with a "*price*"—(1 Cor. vi. 20.)—He has "re-"deemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal. iii. 13.)

In "him we have *redemption* through his "blood—the forgiveness of sins according to "the riches of his grace" (Eph. i. 7—14.) We are "*redeemed* not with corruptible things "but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)—"Thou hast *redeemed* us to "God by thy blood" say the glorious host of heaven—(Rev. v. 9.)

By nature we are the slaves of Satan; but our blessed Redeemer has rescued us from this bondage and brought us into the liberty of his

gospel—By adoption he has made us "heirs "of an inheritance that is undefiled and that "fadeth not away."—

How immeasurable are the obligations he thus confers. The burdened conscience is relieved—The heart that has been penetrated with a keen sense of remorse, for unpardoned sins, finds in the sacrifice of Immanuel an all sufficient atonement—a perfect satisfaction to Divine Justice—and a way of reconciliation opened to the Father of mercies.

4. But a further obligation is laid on professing Christians to obey the injunctions of the Lord Jesus Christ—by a reference to the *future.* He is the appointed *Judge of the Universe* and has promised *eternal life* as the reward of obedience to his commands.—After the lapse of a few more centuries—when the present œconomy shall have accomplished the ends for which it was designed,—"these hea-"vens, (we are assured) will vanish as a scroll, "and this earth with all things on it, shall be "burnt up"—Then shall "The Son of Man "come in his glory, and all his holy angels "with him—and then he shall sit on the "throne of his glory—Before him shall be "gathered all nations—and he shall separate "them one from another, as a shepherd di-"videth the sheep from the goats—He shall "set the sheep on his right hand and the "goats on the left" (Matt. xxv. 31.—Luke ix. 26, &c.) "God hath appointed a day in "which he will judge the world in righteous-"ness by that man whom he hath ordained."

(Acts xvii. 31.) "God shall judge the secrets "of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16.) "The Lord Jesus shall judge the quick and "dead at his appearing and his kingdom." (2 Tim. iv. 1.)

Under a deep impression of this solemn truth—that our rightful Law-giver, who while on earth, where he celebrated his last passover and had broken bread, said to his disciples—"take eat,—*this is my body*—this "do in remembrance of me," will be our final Judge, who will array us before his bar, to receive from his righteous award, "according "to our deeds, whether they have been good "or evil."—When we further call to mind in connection with this awful fact, the assurance that "the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed "from heaven with his mighty angels, in "flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that "know not God, and that *obey not the gospel* "*of our Lord Jesus Christ;* who shall be pu- "nished with everlasting destruction from the "presence of the Lord, and from the glory of "his power." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9.) A full belief of these momentous passages of sacred Scripture, we may suppose, would leave no room for hesitation, whether we should, or should not obey a known injunction of our Divine Master. When he sent forth his disciples to preach to the Jewish nation, he said to them "Into whatever city or town ye "shall enter and they shall not receive you, "*nor hear your words*—when ye depart "shake off the dust of your feet—Verily I

"say unto you that it shall be more tolerable "for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, *in the "day of judgment,* than for that city." (Matt. x. 11, 14, 15.)

"Knowing the terrors of the Lord we per- "suade men" says an inspired apostle (2 Cor. v. 11.) Let no one then who professes to believe in Divine revelation, lightly disobey what an almighty Saviour has enjoined. Let all who consider that *eternal life,* which is the promised recompence of obedience as an object deserving their *highest regard,* reflect well on the obligations under which they lie to the Lord Jesus—as their *Creator—Legislator—Preserver—Redeemer,* and their final *Judge;*—and in reference to the account they will have to render at his bar; and to the punishment which disobedience will then incur; let them appreciate the infinite importance of cheerfully obeying his precepts and injunctions.

LETTER V.

My Dear Friend—

Beside the grounds of obligation to obedience which have been already stated, there are others which ought powerfully to influence an intelligent and moral being. The infinite condescension and love of

our exalted Saviour should penetrate the heart of his followers with the most ardent gratitude. "Although in the form of God, he thought "it not robbery to be equal with God; but "made himself of no reputation, and took upon "him the form of a servant, and was made in "the likeness of man; and being found in the "fashion of a man, he humbled himself and "became obedient unto the death, even the "death of the cross." (Philip. ii. 6, 7.)—And "though he was rich, yet for our sakes be-"came poor that *we*, through *his* poverty "might be made rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

And for this unspeakable condescension what return does he claim? He claims the love and gratitude, and obedience of his followers—"If ye love me" said he to his immediate disciples, "keep my commandments" (John xiv. 15.) "He that hath my commandments, and "keepeth them, he it is that loveth me—and "he that loveth me shall be loved of my Fa-"ther, and I will manifest myself to him. (John xiv. 21, 22, 23.)—He that loveth me not, "keepeth not my sayings."

In the exercise of love, of gratitude, and obedience to the Divine Author of our religion, his professed followers will consult at once their highest interest, and their purest happiness. "In his favour is life." (Psal. xxx. 5.)—"His "loving kindness is better than life." (Psal. lxiii. 5.)—There can be no greater good than to secure the approbation of the Supreme Being. In ten thousand ways he can either bless us, or render us miserable, even in the present

life—and our future destiny rests altogether on his sovereign will.

A judicious author* before quoted, observes on this subject, "that our Lord not only convinces our reason that we ought to obey him; he likewise influences our will and affections by motives excellently adapted to our nature. He leads us to a *grateful obedience* by exhibiting to us, both the wonders of God's love and his own no less astonishing acts of love in assuming our nature and laying down his life for us; and he gives us a most affecting inducement to observe his laws when he says, "Ye are my friends—if ye do whatever I command you" (John xv. 31.)

We should regard with utter aversion and disgust, a child who repaid the care and affection of a wise and tender parent with ingratitude and disrespect. We should esteem that person a disgrace to his species, who for favours, great, repeated, and lasting, made no return to his benefactor but neglect or contempt—But what are all the care and tenderness of our earthly parents compared with those of our Father in heaven—and what the highest favours, *we* can receive from an earthly benefactor compared with that "peace of God which passeth all understanding"—that faith, and hope, and joy—which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the purchase of a Saviour's death.

It was the sentiment of the wisest philosopher of Pagan antiquity, that "if *virtue* could

* Archbishop Newcombe.

" appear on earth, in a human form, she would " attract universal esteem and love."

Christians know that *virtue*, far transcending the highest conceptions of the Heathen Sage—that *perfect excellence has* appeared in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ—But what was his reception even among the chosen seed of Abraham? " He came to his own [pe- " culiar people] but his own [peculiar people] " received him not. (John i. 11.)" He was neglected, despised, persecuted, slandered, and finally put to an excruciating death by sinners whom he came to redeem from the guilt and slavery of sin.

But although the Jewish nation rejected their rightful Sovereign—he had a chosen few, who listened to his instructions, who obeyed his commands, and humbly endeavoured to copy his example. They hesitated not, daily to take up their cross and to follow their Master through good report and evil report; and in many instances calmly encountered death in attestation of their faith in his doctrines, and of their devotion to his cause.

Happy were it for the professed followers of this Divine Teacher, could they observe every command he has left for their direction —Could they often call to remembrance what *he* has done and suffered for them; and thus be enabled to serve him with their time and talents, their souls and bodies, which is nothing more than " a reasonable service."

LETTER VI.

My Dear Friend—

Having contemplated the obligations that should influence believers in Divine Revelation to obey the solemn injunction of our Lord, *often* to commemorate his compassion, his sufferings and his death, and having stated some of the leading motives that should prompt us to the discharge of this duty—let us for a moment pause and look back to the hour when our Lord celebrated his last passover with his disciples, and to the circumstance sunder which, this ordinance was instituted.

See the Blessed Saviour surrounded by his apostles with whom he had most intimately associated during the short period of his public ministry. They had left their little all to follow *him*—they had seen his miracles—they had shared his persecutions by the Jewish Priesthood.—Some of them had beheld his transfiguration on Mount Tabor—all had heard him "speak as never man spake"—and they had cherished the expectation that it was he who at "*this* time would have re-"stored the kingdom to Israel," (Acts i. 6.) and have established a kingdom of transcendent power and unlimited extent. From this select and attached band, the Saviour was

now about to be parted—He knew what sorrow would fill their hearts—he was aware of his approaching agony in the garden of Gethsemane—he foresaw that on that very night he would be betrayed by one disciple—that on the morrow denied by another—(the most ardent, and intrepid of the whole,) and finally be deserted by all—That on the morrow he would be dragged before a prejudiced and implacable Sanhedrim—before a corrupt Heathen Judge, that he would be insulted—slandered—exposed to the rude violence of an infuriate populace—that for six hours he would be suspended on a cross—agonized with pain and be the subject of unfeeling mockery; that he would be beset by the powers of darkness—and be forsaken of his Heavenly Father.—Yet with all these tremendous sufferings in immediate prospect, behold him calmly sitting at supper with his disciples—condescendingly washing their feet, and comforting their depressed minds. Under circumstances so solemn and affecting, he institutes this solemn ordinance, he takes bread, breaks it, and says "take, eat;—do this in remembrance of me"—After my departure celebrate this feast—regard it as the seal and pledge of my love to you and while you eat and drink, say this is the memorial of the infinite compassion of our ascended Lord. During my residence on earth I have given you daily proofs of my confidence and regard. Leaving the glory I had with the Father before the foundation of the world, I have assumed a mortal form—I

have sojourned with you, encompassed by infirmity and suffering—have lived poor and neglected; yet I have passed my days on earth in healing the sick—instructing the ignorant—restoring sight to the blind, and life to the dead—But now the hour is at hand when you will see me agonized and prostrate—This is the hour of darkness and distress—To morrow suspended on the cross, I must *finish* the work of expiation—and go to my Father in Heaven. But, "Let not your hearts be troubled—ye believe in God—believe also in me" —As I have led you—instructed and comforted you hitherto—I will not leave you fatherless—"In my Father's house there are "many mansions—I go to prepare a place for "you, and I will come again to receive you, "that where I am, ye may be also"—In the mean time I leave you one command—it is plain, it is easy—It puts the seal on my past benefits, and is the pledge of greater blessings in reserve—It will serve to awaken in your memories all I have said and done for you—"Take this bread, eat—it is the emblem of "my body that to-morrow will be broken for "you, on the cross—Take this cup—drink "ye *all* of it—it is the emblem of my blood, "that to-morrow will be shed for you, for the "remission of sin.—Do this in remembrance "of me—for as oft as ye do this ye will show "forth my death, with all the blessings con-"nected with it, until I shall come again in "the glory of my Father and with the holy "angels—to judge the universe."—And is it

possible that any heart susceptible of gratitude or attachment, can resist an appeal so tender, so affecting?—You have long hesitated my dear friend to obey this dying command of your Divine Master—But can you still delay? —In the contemplation of such exalted love as that of our blessed Redeemer, at this awful moment,—are you not almost *compelled* to exclaim—"Yes dearest Lord—I submit—I have "too long postponed obedience to thy kind "injunction—I *will* remember thee—I will "recall thy many proofs of goodness through "my past life—I will read the history of thy "love to sinners, I will remember thy life of "suffering, and thy death of torture—I will "remember the great, and all sufficient sacri- "fice thou hast made for the sins of the world, "and with thy bright example in view, and "often calling to mind the instructive lessons "thou hast given to thy followers, I will humbly endeavour to pursue the path thou hast "marked—till my race on earth is finished— "when, through thy grace I shall hope to "reach those mansions above which thou hast "gone before, to provide for thy sincere disciples."

LETTER VII.

My Dear Friend—

To a mind that thinks *correctly*, and to a heart that is rightly disposed, the performance of a known duty is at once a privilege and a pleasure. We delight to *anticipate* the wishes of those whom we truly love. Sincere affection makes the discharge of the severest duties, easy and pleasant. The celebrated Mrs. Rowe used to say in speaking of her deceased father—"That she would have "prefered *death*, to his displeasure."—When the disciples of our Lord at the well near Samaria pressed him to take food—"My *meat*" he replied, "is to do the will of him that sent "me, and to finish his work." (John iv. 34.) Let the timid believer once come to the resolution of enlisting under the banner of the cross, and of submitting to the discipline of the gospel, and he will through the grace that will be afforded, in answer to prayer, find "the yoke" of his Saviour *easy* and his "burden light." It is delightful to go back to the first ages of christianity—and to see with what cheerfulness—with what undaunted firmness the early disciples, in obedience to the injunction of their Lord, celebrated the Sacrament of his Supper.

Shortly after his ascension—St. Luke informs us (Acts ii. 44, 46, 47.) That—"all that

"believed were together, and had all things "in common—and they continuing daily with "one accord in the temple—and *breaking* "*bread from house to house*, did eat their "meat (food) with gladness and singleness of "heart, praising God, and having favour "with all the people."

The same sacred historian informs us (Acts xx. 7.) "that upon the first day of the week "when the disciples (at Troas) came together "to *break bread*, Paul preached to them," &c. It was long the practice of these ancient believers to celebrate this festival of love with the return of every Lord's day. They attached much importance to it. It was considered as the evidence of their faith in Christ, and their union to him as the Captain of their Salvation—It was the "sacramentum"—the *oath* of their allegiance to him; and refusing to partake of this ordinance was regarded as an abjuration of his cause and interest.

How often during those sanguinary persecutions which the church witnessed in its infant state, were the disciples of Christ compelled to worship in secret apartments—in caverns, and in solitudes. Here they listened to the instructions and exhortations of their pastors—here they read or heard the history of their ascended Lord—Here they solaced each other with the assurance of his presence and his favour—and if called to *undergo* torture, or to die as martyrs, that he would assist them to "endure suffering as good soldiers and when "dismissed from the present warfare, that he

"would receive them to a crown of glory in "the heavens."

Here they sung hymns to his praise, and celebrated his redeeming love by partaking of the memorials of his sufferings and death.

Here too they prayed and gave thanks—then by the hands of their deacons, were the emblems of their Lord's death distributed to the assembly. A portion of these was reserved for the sick and dying. Each one was allowed to take away a small part of the elementary bread that had been consecrated to this sacred object; to be used in cases of exposure to extreme suffering or when about to suffer martyrdom in their Master's cause.*

Happy age of the church! Happy even amidst privation and contempt. The disciples then "rejoiced in hope, and were patient in "tribulation," (Rom. xii. 12.) "Though trou-"bled on every side, yet not distressed—per-"plexed, but not in despair—persecuted, but "not forsaken—cast down, but not destroyed." (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.) Although by the unbelieving world they might sometimes be esteemed "sorrowful" they were "always rejoicing, "though poor, yet making many rich, having "nothing, yet possessing all things." (2. Cor. vi. 10.

No arguments, no exhortations were necessary to persuade these early disciples to partake of this edifying and consoling ordinance. The duty became a privilege. It was discharged without reluctance—and from a conviction of

* Chatlain, vol. 2. page 260.

the happy fruits that were produced by partaking of it, frequently and devoutly.—Let the example of these primitive believers, my dear friend, often be recalled to memory. Think of their faith, their firmness, and their piety; till inhaling the same spirit, you come to this resolution, that with the assistance of the Spirit of truth you will "go and do likewise."

LETTER VIII.

My Dear Friend—

You acknowledge the weight of the obligation, and motives to obedience, stated in the preceding letters. You admit that christians are obviously deficient in respect and gratitude to their Redeemer, if they wilfully neglect to comply with his injunction, or abstain from institutions of his appointment. Still however you excuse your own delay in coming to his table, by alledging your unprepared state for this solemnity.

On this subject it is of great importance to form a correct opinion. Have you then ascertained, on scriptural grounds what is *the preparation* that is indispensible to a worthy communion? Do you imagine that nothing short

of a state of sinless perfection, will authorize an attendance on the Lord's Supper; if so, you may indeed despair of ever being suitably prepared.—We are assured on the highest authority that "there is no one who liveth and sinneth not."—(Eccles. vii.) In the heart of the holiest saint, how much indwelling corruption still exists!—No my friend, you must be content to come *just as you are.* The Lord Jesus "came not to call the *righteous* "but *sinners* to repentance." You must come in the exercise of faith, and of repentance, and relying on the assistance of Divine grace; with a fixed resolution to conform in your life and conversation with the rules of the gospel. Availing yourself of all the aids prescribed for advancing in holiness;—namely, of prayer—of meditation—study of the sacred Scriptures, and self examination, you have no ground for apprehension that the blessing of Heaven will be withheld from the use of these appointed means.

But you object—"After using the means, "how shall I ascertain with any certainty that "I am qualified for an admission to this solemn "ordinance? I see many attend it without "scruple, whose lives are in truth a libel on the "profession they make. They must be grossly "deceived in regard to their own state,—and "I ask myself, may not this in like manner be "the case with myself."

My brother, while we avoid presumption we should study not to err from excess of caution. If all Christians were to reason thus, how

thin would the ranks of openly professed followers of the Lord Jesus, then be!

Though your life is below the standard of the gospel; it is stained by no crime. You are not grossly ignorant. You are not an unbeliever in Divine Revelation. You do not *wilfully* indulge in any known sin. Come then, not rashly, but with humility, and with a firm resolution, (aided by strength from above,) that in obedience to your Saviour's dying command, you will commemorate his death, by a frequent attendance on this consolatory ordinance.

"There are many truly devout persons, "who deal more seriously with themselves "than with any one else, and from dejection or "mistaken notions of duty some are disposed "to render this Sacrament a mean of melan- "choly and discouragement instead of consola- "tion and thanksgiving—they consider them- "selves as the chief of sinners, though they can- "not fix on any great crime of which they "have been guilty; and in consequence of this "impression lose that cheerfulness of mind, and "those pleasures which the gospel is calcu- "lated to impart."

To such persons we may say—if men had been perfect the death of Christ would have been unnecessary. The means of grace are appointed for our advancement in holiness—the best of men have their infirmities; but the infirmities and weaknesses to which pious persons are exposed are their grief, against which they zealously contend. This ordinance is ap-

pointed to establish their faith, and to subdue every sin; such persons Christ affectionately invites to come to him for relief. "Come unto "me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, "and I will give you rest."*

When in obedience to our blessed Lord's command we assemble around his table, and eat and drink the appointed emblems of his broken body and shed blood, we are then by *faith* to feed on his spiritual body, and spiritually to drink his blood. We are to resort to our heavenly Father, through our Divine Intercessor—for true *wisdom* to enlighten our minds, and for sincere *love* to warm our hearts. "God is light"—and "God is love," and we most resemble him when we make the greatest advances in knowledge and true holiness.—That "faith, that works by *love* and *purifies* "*the heart*," is the instrument that procures the spiritual food that must nourish our souls, and preserve them in continual health and vigour; but we ought to bear in mind that "faith without works is dead." (James ch. ii. 17, 20.) We are to be "*doers* of the word and "not *hearers* only; deceiving our ownselves." (James ch. i. 22.) We are to "let our light so "shine before men, that others seeing our good "works, may glorify our Father who is in "Heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) It is in short our duty to make a *public* profession of our faith in Christ, wherever circumstances will authorize *the* step. Not that we are to be *ostentatious*,—not that we should make a *parade* of

* Duncan's Devout Communicant.

our faith, but on the other hand we are not to yield to a false shame, and refuse *openly* to acknowledge that best of masters, who encountered disgrace, poverty and death itself, to purchase for his followers a heavenly inheritance. The early disciples were often summoned before Jewish councils and Heathen magistrates, and commanded under the severest penalties to *renounce* their faith in Christ. Those who avowed themselves to be his followers were styled *Confessors*. To those who should thus adhere to the cause of Christianity in defiance of contempt, of torture and of death, the highest rewards, were promised; while such as should shrink from this public avowal, are menaced by our Lord with being disowned by him, before an assembled universe. "Whoso-"ever therefore shall confess me," says our Divine Instructor "before men, him will I con-"fess also before my Father which is in hea-"ven—but whosoever shall *deny* me before "men, him will I also deny before my Father "which is in Heaven." (Matt. x. 32. Or as recorded by the evangelist Luke (ch. xii. 8.) "Whosoever shall *confess* me before men, him "shall the Son of man confess before the angels "of God." On another occasion, our blessed Lord, "when he had called the people, with "his disciples," said to them—"Whosoever "therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my "words in this sinful and adulterous gene-"ration; of him also will the Son of man be "ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the "Father with the holy angels." Mark viii. 38.

"What can we think of those" says the

venerable Dr. Adam Clarke,—"who call "themselves Christians, and very seldom or "never, are found at the Lord's table? They "are either *despisers* or *neglecters* of the dy- "ing words and command of their Lord, and "are unworthy of the benefits resulting from "a due observance of this divine ordinance. "If the omission of a prescribed duty be a "sin against God—and who dares deny it? "then these are sinners against their own "souls. Every soul who wishes not to abjure "his right to the benefits of Christ's passion "and death, should make it a point with God "and his conscience to partake of this ordi- "nance at least four or six times in the year, "and continue thus to show forth the Lord's "death till he come."

The apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans, (chap. x. 9.) has this encouraging assurance, "If thou *confess* with thy mouth the "Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart "that God raised him from the dead, thou "shalt be saved;"—"for," he adds in another passage, (chap. x. 10.)—"with the heart "man *believeth* unto righteousness, and with "the mouth *confession* is made unto salva- "tion."—Such is the encouragement held out to believers to make an *open* profession of their faith—and such too are the awful consequences that will follow their wilful neglect of this duty. On the other hand I shall add two passages of Scripture of tremendous import. Heaven grant that the consideration of them may leave a powerful and durable impression, on your heart—"See that ye refuse not him

"that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who "refused him that spake on earth; much more "shall not we escape if we turn away from "him that speaketh from heaven."—(Heb. xii. 25.)—"For if the word spoken by angels "was stedfast, and every transgression and "disobedience received a just recompence of "reward; how shall *we* escape, if we neglect "so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 2, 3.)

Under a confident assurance then of being recognized by the Sovereign of the Universe, before the holy angels, if we openly profess our faith in Christ, before men—and of being disowned by him in Heaven, if we refuse to acknowledge his authority on *earth;* what sincere believer in Divine Revelation can hesitate a moment on the course he should pursue?—Immortal glory on the one hand—rejection from the presence of our ascended Redeemer on the other.—Oh who would doubt, or pause in a case so plain!

LETTER IX.

My Dear Friend—

You admit that your judgment is convinced on the subject of your *duty*—that you ought without delay to make an *open* pro-

fession of your faith in Christ; but that you have still scruples that you cannot subdue.—That had the institution of the Lord's Supper remained on the footing on which it is placed in the gospels, you would have had no just ground for hesitation or delay. But that certain passages in the writings of the apostle Paul; especially some that may be found in the 11th chap. of his first epistle to the Corinthians; and in the 6th and 10th chapters of his epistle to the Hebrews; are calculated to excite the dread of timorous believers; and you doubt not, "have deterred many others as "well as yourself from asking admission to this "solemn ordinance."

There is certainly much apparent ground for your scruples, according to the phraseology of our common version of the Bible; and without a due consideration of the circumstances under which the epistles in question were written. But I trust you will find that your difficulties will vanish when you come to understand the *true import* of those passages of Scripture to which you have referred.

On this subject let us turn to some of the ablest expounders of the New Testament,—to writers whose lives were passed in the study of the original languages in which the sacred Scriptures were composed, and whose talents, learning, and judgment are entitled to our highest confidence and respect.

Dr. Macknight, who is perhaps the ablest commentator who has written on the apostolical epistles—and who was eminently skilled in

the Greek language, gives the following paraphrase of those two verses in the 11th chap. of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which in our common translation have always worn the most terrifying aspect.

1 Cor. chap. xi. ver. 27.—*Common translation*—" Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this " bread, and drink this cup of the Lord un- " worthily, shall be guilty of the body and " blood of the Lord."

PARAPHRASE.

" So then whoever shall eat this bread and " drink this cup of the Lord unworthily— " either by eating it as a common meal,—or as " the bond of a faction—or to promote some " worldly purpose; shall be guilty of *profan- " ing the symbols*, of the body and blood of the " Lord."

Text in the common version.—Verse 29th. " For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, " eateth and drinketh damnation to himself— " not discerning the Lord's body."

DR. MACKNIGHT'S PARAPHRASE.

" For he that eateth the Lord's Supper im- " properly, *subjects himself to punishment;* " because he does not discriminate, the sym- " bols of the body of the Lord from common " bread and wine, designed for the nourish- " ment of life."

On the word translated " *damnation*"—Dr. Macknight has the following note—

" *Drinketh punishment.*" That this is

"the signification of "KRIMA"—(here trans-
"lated "*damnation*" in the common ver-
"sion of the Bible) is plain from the following
"verse where the Corinthians are said to be
"visited with sickness, debility and death, for
"eating unworthily. Besides *Krima*, is often
"used in the New Testament to denote *punish-
"ment*, as in Matt. xxiii. 14. Rom. xiii. 2.
"James iii. 1. and 1 Pet. iv. 17."

Dr. Doddridge in a note on this word, in his Family Expositor, makes the following remark—

"I think it" says he "*the most unhappy
"mistake* in all our version of the Bible, that
"the word *Krima*, is here translated "*dam-
"nation*." It has raised a dread in tender
"minds which has greatly obstructed, the com-
"fort they might have received from this or-
"dinance—The apostle afterwards says, "we
"are *judged*"—that is, as he afterwards ex-
"plains it, "we are corrected, that we may
"not be condemned;" which plainly shows
"the judgments spoken of, might be *fatherly
"chastisements*." "*This* sin, (as *sin*,) does
"indeed expose us to condemnation, should
"God be extreme to mark it, as an irreverent
"behaviour under any ordinance, does;—but
"it is *superstition* to set this at so vast a dis-
"tance from all the rest as many do."

The Greek word "*Krima*," having in *many* instances without due consideration, been rendered, by the word "*damnation*" in our common version of the Bible, and in other places by the word "condemnation," it is a matter

of no little importance to persons not skilled in the Greek tongue, to know what is the *true* meaning of this very formidable word.

It is derived from the Greek verb "*Krino*" to *judge* and it has been incorrectly translated by the English word "*damnation,*" in the following passages of the New Testament. In 1 Cor. ch. xi. 29.—In Matt. xxiii. 14.—Mark xii. 40.—Luke xx. 47.—Rom. iii. 8 and xiii. 2. But in various other passages, it has been rendered into English by the word *judgment,* or *condemnation,* as in (Rom. ch. v. 16.) "For "the *judgment* (*Krima*) was by one unto *con-* "*demnation,*" (*Krima,*) or according to Dr. Macknight's more accurate translation. "For "verily the *sentence,* was for one offence to "*condemnation,*" on which he has the following note.

"The original word "*Krima,*" signifies "the sentence of a judge, especially a sentence "of condemnation."

So again in St. Luke's gospel (ch. xxiv. 26.) "And how the chief priests and our ru- "lers delivered him to be *condemned* (*Krinomai*) to death," and again in (ch. xxiii. 40.) "Dost thou not fear God," seeing thou art in the same *condemnation.* (*Krima.*) In like manner in the gospel according to Matthew (ch. viii. 2.) for with what *judgment* (*Krima*) ye *judge,* ye shall be *judged,* (the same verb.)

In our common version of the New Testament, is the following passage (Rom. iii. 8.)

"And not rather, (as we be slanderously "reported, and as some affirm that we say,)

"let us do evil that good may come)—whose "*damnation* is just."

Thus rendered by Dr. Macknight.—"And "not add, as we are slanderously reported to "practise, and as some affirm we order"—"Certainly let us do evil that good may come," of these, the *condemnation* is just."

In like manner in Rom. ch. xiii. 2. are these words.

"Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth "the ordinance of God; and they that resist "shall receive to themselves *damnation*."

Thus translated by Dr. Macknight.—"Wherefore he that setteth himself in oppo-"sition to the power, resisteth the ordinance "of God, and they who resist, shall procure "*punishment* (*Krima*) to themselves."

Dr. Campbell, one of the most accurate and judicious writers, and one of the most profound Greek scholars, who has at any period written on the Sacred Scriptures, in his admirable translation of the New Testament, uniformly translates the Greek word "*Krima*," by the English words "*punishment*, or *condemnation*."

In his note on Mark ch. xii. 40. he has the following, just and striking observation—

"But this word *damnation*, is confined to "the punishment of Hell, to which the impeni-"tent will hereafter be condemned. I think "it unwarrantable in a translator to limit the "words of the sacred penmen to this meaning, "when neither the terms used, nor any thing "in the context can be said to limit them."

The phrase "*Krises tees Gehennees, and* "*aionios Krisis,*" the literal sense of which is—"*the punishment of Hell,*" and "*eternal* "*punishment,*" are the *only* terms in the gospel which may be rendered "*damnation,*" and even in *these* I think it preferable for an obvious reason, to use the periphrasis (circumlocution) of the sacred writer. By the frequent, unnecessary, and sometimes censurable recourse of translators to the terms, "*damned*" "*damnation,*" *and* "*damnable,*" and others of a like import, an asperity is given to the language of most modern translators of the New Testament, which the original evidently has not."

And in his note on Mark xvi. 16. the same learned writer observes, "the term "*damn-* "*ed*" with us relates solely to the doom which shall be pronounced on the wicked at the last day. This cannot be affirmed with truth of the Greek word "*Kata-krino,*" which corresponds exactly with the English word "*con-* "*demn.*" Messrs Beausobre and L'Enfant, in their French version of the New Testament, uniformly translate the Greek word "*Krima,*" *condemnation,* and in their remarks on the memorable passage in the epistle to the Corinthians which has led to the present investigation, they observe, that "St. Paul's expres- "sions in (1 Cor. ch. xi. 29.) are lively, but "*figurative,*" and refer for explanation of them, to Levit. xxii. 2. &c.

I remain truly yours.

LETTER X.

My Dear Friend—

The incorrect translation of the Greek word "*Krima,*" which occurs in the 29th verse ch. xi. of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, having occasioned so much misconception and excited so much groundless dread among persons of tender consciences, who were disposed—nay anxious to partake of the Lord's Supper; I cannot think you will regret obtaining further light on the subject, by the perusal of the opinions of able and learned Theologians on this passage. For your satisfaction, I will extract some explanatory remarks from two eminent authors, whose writings are much esteemed.

The first passage I shall copy, is from the celebrated "Elements of Theology," by the Bishop of Lincoln.

In his observations on the following extract from the 25th Article of the Church of England. "But they that receive them, (the Sacraments) *unworthily*, purchase to themselves *damnation*, as St. Paul says,"—our author has these remarks.—

The passage here referred to, is the following, and it relates to the Lord's Supper only. "For he that eateth, &c." (1 Cor. ch. xi. 29.)—It is material to observe that the

word "*damnation*" at the time the Bible was translated, meant no more than *condemnation:* any sentence of punishment whatever, without a particular reference to the *eternal torments*, to which the impenitently wicked will be consigned at the last day; and that St. Paul in the above passage does not refer to that dreadful punishment, appears from the following verse, "for this cause many are weak and "sickly among you, and some *sleep*, that is— "are *dead*."

"The Corinthians had been guilty of great abuses in the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, and the *damnation* which they thereby brought on themselves, was, as we learn from St Paul, weakness, sickness and death; that is *temporal punishments* only, and not *eternal damnation*."

"This is also evident from the 32d verse, where it is said "But when we are *judged*, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should "not be condemned with the world," that is, when we are punished in this manner in the present life, we are chastened by our Heavenly Father, that we may be brought to a sense of our duty, and by reforming ourselves—may avoid that *condemnation* which the impenitent world will suffer in a future state. The word "*Krima*" used by St. Paul in this passage occurs frequently in the New Testament but in *no one instance* does it exclusively signify the sentence of *eternal punishment*. It is sometimes translated *judgment*, as "the time "to come that judgment (*Krima*) will be- "gin at the house of God," 1 Pet. iv. 17. and

sometimes it is rendered "*condemnation*," as when one of the malefactors who was crucified with our Blessed Lord rebukes the other in these words, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing "thou art in the same *condemnation*." (*Krima.*) It is evident that in these passages *eternal damnation* could not have been meant. When therefore it is said that by "unworthily "receiving the Lord's Supper, men purchase "for themselves damnation;" the meaning is, that by so doing they are guilty of a great sin, and are therefore liable to punishment from God; but this like other sins may be repented of, and forgiven through the merits, and for the sake of the blessed Redeemer. In a note to the foregoing, the Bishop of Lincoln adds,—"It is much to be feared that the ex-"pression "we eat and drink our own *damna-*"*tion*," in our communion service, deters many persons from participating of the Lord's Supper; and therefore I recommend to *clergymen*, occasionally to explain to their congregations the meaning of the original passage from which it is taken, as well as the sense of the word *damnation*, when our Bible was translated. That the compilers of our Liturgy did not intend to apply the word "*damnation*" any more than St. Paul, the word "*Krima*" to *eternal punishment*, is evident from what follows, viz. "We kindle God's wrath against us; we pro-"voke him to plague us with divers diseases, "and sundry kinds of death."

The only other extract I shall make on this important passage (1 Cor. ch. xi. 29.) is from

the learned and venerable Mr. Stackhouse,* I give it at large because I think it is more clear and satisfactory than I have met with, in any other writer.

"In order, says he, to know the true meaning of the words of the apostle, it will be necessary to observe that in the primitive church it was usual to bring to the religious assemblies, every one as he was able and disposed, provisions for a common entertainment." Out of these provisions a convenient portion was set apart to be consecrated for the blessed Sacrament. This Sacrament was in some churches celebrated before, in others after, the feast of love, (as that entertainment was used to be called,) but in all places, they were both celebrated in company with each other. The design of these feasts, was to express friendship and concord, and to shew that christians esteemed themselves one family, and one body—to be a comfort to the poor whose necessities were thus relieved at the public expence; and to speak the charity and condescension of the rich, who thus declared their poorer brethren in all christian privileges, fellow members and equal with the greatest. These voluntary contributions were styled *oblations*, because every contributor was understood to devote what he brought to a religious use, and to divest himself of all manner of property in it. And therefore as these entertainments were designed for the *whole* body of believers every one who came

* See his body of Divinity.

to the communion had a right to share alike, though all did not contribute alike—nay, though the circumstances of some were so strait that they could not contribute any part at all."

"Now when this parity was broken in upon, when every one would take upon him to eat at his own time, in separate company and in proportion to his own bringing; the rich met, and excluding the poor from what should have been the common entertainment, after much riot and excess, they went to the Sacrament in no small disorder. One was hungry, having eaten nothing at all; and others drunken, having feasted intemperately; and so the poor were despised and neglected. This, the apostle condemns as a gross profanation of that solemn institution, at the participation whereof they behaved with as little reverence as if they had been at a common meal. This is the *eating and drinking* which he calls *unworthy*, for which he pronounces them, "guilty of the "body and blood of the Lord," and tells them that they incur the judgment of God. For that the word "*Krima*" which our translators render *damnation*, does not here signify *eternal misery*, or that which is elsewhere termed the *damnation of Hell*, but only a temporal judgment and chastisements, in order to the prevention of eternal condemnation; is evident from what follows. "For this cause, many are "weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" that is,—for this irreverence, God hath sent among you several diseases of which many

have died. Wherefore my brethren, says the apostle "when ye come together to eat," (viz. at these love feasts) "tarry one for another; "and if any hunger, let him eat at home, that "ye come not together unto judgment." The *crime* for which the Corinthians were censured by the apostle, was then clearly, the irreverent and disorderly participation of the Sacrament; and their *punishment*, was those temporal diseases, and other chastisements which God inflicted on them for this, their irreverence and contempt."

"And now" adds our author, "is it not clear as the light, that in a church like ours, where the consecrated elements are distributed as nigh to the primitive institution as well as can be imagined, the *unworthiness* charged upon the Corinthians neither is, nor can possibly be ours. And if so, it follows that those texts of St. Paul are perverted to a very wrong use, when they are made a pretence for keeping from the holy table, the persons whose present circumstances have no manner of affinity with them."

From the foregoing illustrations, I trust my friend, that you must be satisfied in regard to the meaning of the word *damnation* as used by the apostle Paul in the 29th verse of the xi. ch. of 1 Cor. Further quotations would only be a tax on your patience.

I have been anxious by what I have given from learned men, to remove a false impression respecting the text in question, under a full persuasion that I should thus obviate a

most formidable scruple, and remove a stumbling block, which has had a very unhappy influence on many young and timid converts; a difficulty which has detered thousands from partaking of a Sacrament, that is calculated to impart the liveliest joy to a true penitent, and to afford solid consolation under the pressure of affliction and at the close of every believer's life.

I remain very truly yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

My Dear Friend—

A second passage in the writings of the apostle Paul which you say has given you much uneasiness, and which you think is calculated to excite the apprehensions of timid converts; is contained in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the 4th, 5th, and 6th, verses. The words are as fol- "low. For it is impossible for those who were "once enlightened, and have tasted of the "heavenly gift, and were made partakers of "the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good "word of God, and the powers of the world "to come; if *they* shall fall away, to renew

"them again unto repentance, seeing they "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, "and put him to an open shame."

The meaning that has too frequently been attached to this passage is in substance, that they who have once been convinced of sin—who have seen the necessity of a Saviour—who have made an open profession of their faith in him, especially by a participation of the Lord's Supper, and have afterwards relapsed into former habits of impiety or vice; may be said to have "crucified afresh the Son of God, "and put him to an open shame," cannot be "renewed to repentance," but have been guilty of "an unpardonable sin."

This passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, has been the subject of much discussion among Theologians, and is one on which there has existed considerable diversity of sentiment. Instead of venturing any opinion of my own, on a matter so controverted I shall endeavour to collect and exhibit what appears to be the soundest construction given by some of our most intelligent commentators.

The pious and learned *Burkitt*, thus explains the passage.

* By the "enlightened," here understand those that were baptized and embraced christianity. The ancients called *baptism, illumination;* and *baptized persons,* the *enlightened;* because of the Divine illumination which was conveyed to the minds of men by the knowledge of christianity. By "tasting of the hea-

* See Burkitt on the New Testament in loco.

"venly gift, and being made partakers of the "Holy Ghost;"—understand such as had not only heard of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, but who had some experience of them, themselves; as also of the spiritual benefits conferred upon them in baptism, by the Holy Spirit. By "tasting of the good word of "God,"—understand some relish of the truth and goodness of the gospel—some pleasure in entertaining it, by reason of the gracious promises of eternal life contained in it.

The gospel that proclaimed remission of sins was a "good word." This good word they saw by miracles, tongues and prophecy, and so could not but be convinced of the truth of it.

"The powers of the world to come,"—that is, "the powers of the gospel age," for *the world to come*, in the language of the prophets, signifies *the times of the Messiah;* And thus "the powers of the world to come"—are the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost, bestowed on men, in order to the propagation of the gospel. Such were the gifts of healing, of casting out devils, working miracles, &c.

Others by "tasting of the powers of the "world to come," understand, some apprehensions of the resurrection and future judgment with affections suitable thereto. "Now concerning these," says the apostle, "if *they* "fall away," that is, if they shall *apostatize* from this profession, in consequence of their love to the present world, or from fear of persecution and sufferings; if they shall relapse

"either to *heathenism* or to *judaism*; it is im-
"possible to renew them again to repentance,"
that is, it is a thing very difficult—hardly to
be hoped for, that such wilful apostates should
be restored again by repentance, "seeing they
"crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God,
"and put him to an open shame," that is, they
virtually and in effect crucify him over again
inasmuch as in them lies; for by denying and
renouncing him, they declare him to be an
impostor, and consequently worthy of death.
So that the plain sense of these words seems
to be this, "If those who are baptized and
"have received the doctrines of the gospel,
"and are endowed with the gifts of the Holy
"Ghost, shall yet after all, *apostatize* from
"christianity, it is very difficult, and next to
"impossible, to recover such by repentance,
"seeing they are guilty of as great a crime,
"as if in their own persons they had put to
"death, and ignominiously used the Son of
"God."

An exposition corresponding in substance with the foregoing, from Mr. Burkitt, I extract from Mr Stackhouse's Complete Body of Divinity.* After transcribing the passage now under consideration, this learned Theologian says, "We must remember, 1. That it is very usual in Scripture to express that by *impossible*, which is extremely difficult, or impossible for human strength, unassisted by divine grace to accomplish. Thus in the case of "rich "men's entering into the kingdom of heaven."

* See page 553.

(Matt. xix. 26.) Our blessed Saviour explains himself by saying that, though the thing be *impossible* with regard to the temptations such person are liable to, and their natural inability to resist them, "yet the things that are im- "possible with men, are possible with God," (Luke xviii. 27.) that is, he, by the prevailing influence of his grace, may wean their hearts from the world, and enable them to overcome their darling inclinations. And in like manner though men who resist and quench the Holy Spirit, by sin, cannot *renew themselves*, yet *God* can give them the heart, and power of repentance and renovation; and therefore the word *impossible* here, is not to be taken in a strict and rigorous, but in a comparative sense only."

2. "That these texts in the Hebrews, relate not to *every sort* of wilful offenders, but to such only as *revolt and fly off entirely*, from the faith of the gospel. For this reason they are branded with the name of *adversaries*—such as "crucify the Son of God afresh,"—as trample him under foot,—"count the blood of "the covenant an unholy thing—and do de- "spite to the Spirit of grace." And these men to be sure it is impossible to renew, while they continue in their apostacy; because they have cast off their only remedy. *Faith*, we all know, is the indispensible condition of pardon; but this they have rejected and disclaimed, and consequently are not within the covenant, nor under the influence of grace; they have denied the Lord that bought them, they have

renounced the whole religion of Christ, and therefore cannot reap any benefit from the sacrifice of that blood which they esteem common and no sacrifice at all; or from the merits of him whom they tread under foot, as if he were still dead, and lying in the grave, and consequently account him a vile miscreant and impostor."

"But the case is far different with those "who are engaged in a sinful course, and yet "have not made such dangerous defection, or "thrown off the profession of christianity. "They may see their folly and acknowledge "the merit of their Saviour's atonement; they "may comply with the good motions of the "Spirit which they have too long resisted, "though they have not formally *done public* "*despite to him.* There is a mighty difference "between walking unworthy of the christian "profession, and being *open and avowed ad-* "*versaries* to it; between a conversation, *un-* "*becoming* the gospel, and principles that "professedly overthrow it; and consequently "those passages in Scripture which strike at "one of these and declare it incapable of for- "giveness, need not—must not be applied to "the other, so as to exclude from it all hope "and comfort, a case so very unlike it."

To fortify the foregoing explanation from Mr. Stackhouse, I subjoin an extract from the commentary and notes of the learned and judicious Dr. Macknight.

His commentary on this passage from the 6th, chap. of Hebrews is as follows.—

"For it is impossible for us to restore a second time by repentance, those who have "been once enlightened by believing the gospel, and have tasted of the heavenly gift of "freedom from the yoke of the law of Moses, "and from the grievous superstitions of heathenism, which is bestowed on Jews and "Gentiles under the gospel, and have been "made partakers of the gifts of the Holy "Ghost at their baptism. And have perceived "the excellence of the word of God, the doctrines and promises of the gospel, and have "seen the efficacy of the powers of the gospel "dispensation, in reforming sinners, and yet "have renounced the gospel in the imagination that Jesus was justly punished with "death as an impostor, crucifying a second "time in their own mind, and making a public "example of the Son of God, by inwardly approving of, and consenting to his punishment."

His notes on this passage, are as follow.

"For it is impossible to renew again by repentance."—"The apostle does not mean "that it is impossible for *God* to renew a "second time by repentance an apostate, but "that is impossible for the *Ministers of Christ* "to convert a second time to the faith of the "gospel, one, who after being made acquainted "with all the proofs by which God hath "thought fit to establish Christ's mission, shall "allow himself to think him an impostor, and "renounce his gospel. The apostle knowing "this, was anxious to give the Hebrews just

" views of the ancient oracles in the hope that " it would prevent them from *apostatizing*." " Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son " of God," &c.—

Apostates are said to crucify in their own mind the Son of God, a second time, and to expose him to infamy; because by speaking of him as an impostor, and inwardly approving of the punishment which was inflicted on him, they showed that they would have joined his persecutors in putting him to death, if they had had an opportunity to do it.

On the authority of this text chiefly, the Novatians excluded from their communion, those who in the time of the Diocletian persecution delivered up their copies of the Scriptures, and renounced the profession of the gospel. But the character and circumstances of the apostates, of whom the apostle speaks, were very different from the character and circumstances of the apostates in the Diocletian persecution. The Hebrew apostates had seen the miracles of Jesus and his apostles and had been themselves partakers of the Holy Ghost, and thereby had been *enlightened*, or persuaded to embrace the gospel, yet through the influence of their passions and lusts, they had lost their conviction of its divine original, and had returned to Judaism; and to vindicate themselves had spoken of Jesus as an impostor, who was justly put to death for his crimes.

Persons acting in this manner in opposition to all the evidences of the gospel, could not in the ordinary course of things be *converted a*

second time to the christian faith, because no further evidence could be offered to them. Besides, their apostacy proceeding from the corruption of their hearts, was wilful: (Heb. x. 26.) The case of the apostates in the Diocletian persecution was different. Through fear of torture they had delivered up the Scriptures in token of their renouncing christianity. Yet being convinced of its truth, they were still christians in their hearts. Now however culpable these men may have been for their cowardice and hypocrisy, there was nothing in their case, as in the case of others, which made it impossible for the Ministers of Christ to persuade them to repent. The Novatians therefore showed great ignorance, as well as great uncharitableness in contending that the apostle had declared the repentance of such persons impossible, and that for their sin, as for the sin of those mentioned, (Heb. x. 29.) no atonement was provided in the gospel.

Dr. Macknight in his explanation of the passage under consideration, quotes the following extract from PIERCE, who in his note on this verse says,

"The reason why our author speaks so se-
"verely of such *apostates*, may be taken partly
"from the nature of the evidence which they
"rejected. The fullest and clearest evidence
"which God ever designed to give of the truth
"of christianity, was these miraculous opera-
"tions of the Spirit; and when men were not
"only eye witnesses of these miracles, but
"were likewise themselves empowered to

"work them; and yet after all, rejected their "evidence, they could have no farther, or "higher evidence whereby they should be "convinced; so that their case must in that re- "spect appear desperate. This may be partly "owing to their putting themselves out of the "way of conviction, if they could not see "enough to settle them in the profession of "the Christian Religion, while they made a "profession of it: much less were they like to "meet with any thing new, to convince and "reclaim them, when they had taken up an "opposite profession, and joined themselves to "the inveterate enemies of christianity."

LETTER XII.

My Dear Friend—

The last passage in the writings of the apostle Paul to which you refer, as containing a doctrine calculated to excite the apprehensions of timid christians, and to keep them at a distance from the table of communion, is the following, (Heb. x. 26, 27.)

"For if we sin wilfully, after that we have "received the knowledge of the truth, there "remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a "certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and

"fiery indignation, which shall devour the ad-
"versaries."

The Epistle from which these words are taken, it will be remembered was addressed to Jewish converts, many of whom had witnessed the miracles, and heard the discourses of our Lord while on earth. Some had probably enjoyed the gift of the Holy Ghost, and might themselves have been endowed with miraculous powers. Yet in most of these converts from Judaism, from the influence of education and early prejudice, there was a strong inclination to incorporate the institutions of Moses, with those of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finding this to be impracticable, and having every inducement which *love of the world*—a regard to the *praise of men*—the prospects of favour and emolument from their civil rulers, on the one hand; and fear of persecution—the dread of obloquy—desertion of friends and relations—the loss of reputation and property, to encounter, on the other; these were weighty considerations, and such as are too apt to sway the popular mind. To prevent the influence of these motives from drawing the first converts from Judaism, back to a mere *covenant of works*—to a system of ceremony which always was a burden, too heavy for the Jewish people; seems to have been a consideration that powerfully impressed the eloquent apostle who composed this Epistle.

From a collation of the sentiments of some of our ablest Commentators, the following appears to be their impression in regard to the

passage above quoted. They seem to think that "sinning willfully" does not mean *every* intentional sin, but sinning *obstinately, perseveringly,* and *maliciously;* or probably, renouncing christianity.

"After having received the knowledge of "the truth—"that is, after having made a public profession of christianity—being baptized; and after being admitted to the Holy communion; that if after such a profession, from fear of shame or suffering, or from an undue love of the world—of its honours, pleasures, or emoluments, we withdraw from the household of faith, and attach ourselves to the enemies of the gospel; in such case we expose ourselves to "judgment and to fiery indignation;" that is, to the just censure of the pious, and to the displeasure of our almighty Judge.

"There remains no more sacrifice for sin"—that is, God will not again send his Son to suffer and to die for sinners. He has been made, once for all, an oblation for the sins of the world; and if his sacrifice is rejected, there is no ground for apostates to hope for another.

The passage in question is thus explained by Dr. Doddridge.—

"For *if we sin wilfully,* presumptuously, "by apostatizing, "after having received the "knowledge of the truth," with such incon- "testible evidence and power; "there re- "maineth no more sacrifice for sin," nor is it "possible to find any atonement that shall be "efficacious, after having thus ungratefully and "wickedly disowned that, which God had ap- "pointed."

Dr. Macknight's remarks on the passage are as follow—

"For if terrified by the evils that attend a "profession of the gospel, we renounce it con- "trary to our conscience, after having attained "the knowledge and belief of the gospel, there "remaineth to such persons no more sacrifice "for sin, but some dreadful apprehension of "the judgment remaineth, and a punishment "by fire, the effect of God's anger, to devour "all the adversaries of God, whether secret "or open."

His *notes* on this passage are as follow—viz.

Ver. 26. "If we sin wilfully, &c."

"Many pious but weak christians have been "greatly terrified by this text, not knowing that "the apostle speaks, not of *wilful sin in gene-* "*ral*, but of *deliberate apostacy* manifested by "the apostates forsaking the christian assem- "blies. For the description which the apostle "hath given in ver. 29. of the wilful sin of "which he speaks, agrees only to deliberate "apostacy, which in the first age, was of so "heinous a nature, that Christ declared he "would deny the person before his Father, "who should deny *him* before men." (Matt. x. 33.)

"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin."

"As the apostle in the former part of the "epistle had proved that the sacrifices of the "law were all abolished, and that the only sa- "crifice for sin remaining is the sacrifice of "Christ, it follows as *Peirce* justly observes, "that *apostates* who wilfully renounce the

"benefit of that sacrifice, have no sacrifice for "sin remaining to them."

Ver. 27. "But a certain fearful looking "for of judgment."

"Here the apostle lays it down as certain "that God will not pardon sinners without "some sacrifice or satisfaction. For otherwise "it would not follow, from there remaining no "more sacrifice for sin, that there must re- "main to them a dreadful expectation of judg- "ment, and fiery indignation which shall de- "vour the adversaries."

"This is an allusion to the fire that came "out from the Lord, and consumed the 250 "men who on the rebellion of Korah, intruded "themselves into the priests' office, and whose "destruction is an emblem of the destruction "of the wicked by fire at the day of judg- "ment." (See 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.)

I am truly yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

My Dear Friend—

I had indulged the hope that after the exposition given above, in relation to those passages in the writings of "him who "was not a whit behind the chiefest of the

"apostles," which have excited the apprehensions of timid minds; that your scruples would have been removed, and that you would have at once come, without reluctance, to the sacramental table. Still you object that from the perusal of the passages that have been illustrated, if avowed followers of Christ, after having made a public profession of faith in the gospel, should relapse into former habits of sin, the condition of such persons in every point of view is worse than if they had never made any profession of religion. And you seriously ask whether I do not think they would be guilty of what is called "the unpardonable "sin?"

From all the consideration and enquiry I have been able to bestow on this subject I have drawn the conclusion that no such sin can *now* exist; and that the only sin of this description which ever did exist, is what is styled in Scripture "Blasphemy against the Holy "Ghost." This offence appears to have consisted exclusively, in maliciously and wilfully imputing to the influence of Satan, those miracles which were performed by our Saviour, or by those of his followers who had this power committed to them; and that it was limited to the period of our Saviour's ministry, and to the first ages of the christian church; when the *extraordinary* gifts of the Holy Spirit were conferred on the followers of Christ, as essential to the propagation and establishment of his religion.

By carefully observing the terms used by

the Evangelists Matthew and Mark in relation to this sin, its nature and extent may readily be ascertained. It appears that our Lord had just been curing a demoniac who was at once blind and dumb. This was a striking exhibition of his Divine power at which "*all the* "*people* were so *amazed* that *they cried out*, "*is* not this the Son of David?"

When the Pharisees heard it, full of malice and of envy, they said "this fellow doth not "cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince "of devils." Such was the tenor of their conversation with each other. But our Lord "knowing their thoughts" reasoned with them, and showed them how impossible, and how absurd it was, that the chief of evil spirits could at one and the same time, show a disposition to do both good and evil; that he should be the instrument of *inflicting* diseases, and at the same time of *curing* them; and how impossible it was that a kingdom so divided against itself, could stand.

After this our Lord concludes with assuring his hearers by way of inference from what he had just been urging, "*Wherefore*, all man-"ner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven "to the sons of men" but that "blasphemy "(or false slander) *against the* Holy Ghost "shall not be forgiven unto men." (Matt. xii. 31.) Or as it is recorded in the Evangelist Mark, "All sins and blasphemies wherewith "so ever they shall blaspheme, shall be for-"given unto the sons of men; but he that shall "blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath

"never forgiveness, but is in danger of eter-
"nal condemnation." (Mark iii. 28, 29.)

Such are circumstances which led our Lord to declare in what that offence consisted which has been denominated "the *unpardonable* "sin."

Many pious and learned men I know, have believed and taught that there are various acts which men might commit, which because of their resemblance in point of aggravation, to the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, must incur a like punishment with that annexed to this offence. But this is mere matter of inference. There is no authority for it in the sacred Scriptures. Because our Lord as Supreme Legislator has been pleased to exclude *one* offence from the benefit of pardon, here and hereafter, does it follow that any human being, because of some *fancied analogy*, has a right to extend the same punishment to other offences? To do this he must violate the plain declaration of our Lord himself, who assures us "that *all* sin shall be pardoned to the "sons of men," this sin against the Holy Spirit, alone excepted.

You will perhaps remind me that the apostle John in his First Epistle (chap. v. 16.) expressly affirms that there is "a sin unto death."

But while this is freely admitted, he speaks of but *one* sin of this description, and there seems to be no good reason why the apostle did not allude to the sin of which we have been speaking. This passage from St. John is thus paraphrased by Dr. Doddridge in his

Family Expositor. "There is "a sin unto "death" I mean such an apostasy from chris- "tianity as is attended with blaspheming the "operations of the Spirit of God, and ascrib- "ing them to Satan."

Another learned Commentator* on the New Testament, in his exposition of these words, has the following observations. "Now in the "verse before us he (the apostle) relates the "benefits which others receive by their pray- "ers, as well as themselves, assuring them that "if any did pray for an offending brother they "should be heard in what they desired, unless "the person they prayed for, had sinned *the* "*unpardonable sin*, the *sin unto death*; by "which we are to understand, apostasy from "the christian religion unto idolatry; as ap- "pears from the following words, "Keep "yourselves from idols;" which caution has "no manner of dependence on what went be- "fore, unless we understand *the sin unto death* "in this sense; or if with others we call it "the sin against the Holy Ghost," it comes to "the same thing; for what is that sin but *a re-* "*nouncing of christianity*—denying the truth "of the christian faith, *after illumination and* "*conviction by the Holy Ghost*, and mali- "ciously persecuting the sincere professors "of it."

You ask "*why* it is that the sin of *blas-* "*phemy against the Holy Ghost* should be so "peculiarly the object of the Divine displeasure "as to be put beyond the reach of pardon,

* Mr. Burkitt.

"either in this world or in the world to come?" I answer that it is probably because this sin above all others evinced such a deep depravity of heart, so resolute a determination to close the understanding against light, and the conscience against conviction, that no means short of a miracle could reclaim offenders of this character.

They were eye-witnesses of the most astonishing proofs of Divine power—They saw the lame walking, the dumb speaking, the sick healed, the blind receiving sight, and the dead raised to life. These were *facts* of which they could entertain no doubt, and they were conscious that nothing short of a divine and supernatural agency, could perform such miracles. But instead of yielding to the evidence of their senses, and the conviction of their understandings, they maliciously imputed these astonishing effects, to the influence of the Prince of demons; thus making Christ and his followers, confederates of Satan—representing the christian religion as the contrivance of hell, and the operations of the Spirit of God, as those of an apostate angel. Prejudice so obstinate, and malignity so bitter, was evidently proof against all instruction, and could be overcome only by a miracle. There is no reason to believe that the Deity ever *constrains* any one to believe against his will. He "draws us with "the cords of love:" but when his gracious influence is *resisted*—when the "Spirit is "quenched," he leaves the obdurate heart to remorse and despair. "Ephraim is joined to "his idols, let him alone."

It is not improbable but that this offence denominated "the sin unto death," may have been perpetrated after the ascension of our Saviour—perhaps until the entire cessation of miracles.

When this event took place, history does not satisfactorily inform us. But from the concurrent testimony of the ancient fathers of the christian church, it is certain that miracles were performed for many years after the death of the apostles and their immediate successors.

Both CELSUS and the Emperor JULIAN, enlightened, but obstinate infidels; while they admitted the fact, in regard to the miracles of our Lord and his disciples, maliciously ascribed them to *magic*, and to the influence of the *evil* spirit. Upon the whole then my friend you must perceive how little foundation there is for the scruples you have indulged, and which have unhappily kept you so long at a distance from a sacrament, which brings you into a most delightful communion with the professed followers of the blessed Saviour. You see that "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" is the *only* sin that has been declared to be beyond the reach of pardon; that this offence could only be committed prior to the cessation of miracles, and if pronounced to be "a sin unto "death," it was not from any deficiency of merit in Christ to atone for it, nor of mercy in God to forgive it; but because it evinced such obdurate depravity of heart, such perverse malignity, and such incorrigible obstinacy, as rejected the last, and only means of conviction

and amendment; and consequently, (without a miraculous interference of Divine power)—put the offender beyond the reach of the motives to repentance, or of obedience, and consequently, of pardon.

I am with much regard
Yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

My Dear Friend—

While you admit generally, the importance and necessity of making an open profession of your faith, by joining in the communion at the Lord's table, you still continue to entertain doubts of your preparation for so solemn an ordinance. You say, there are several descriptions of nominal christians, whom it is usual to admonish, by no means to join in the celebration of this holy sacrament; and that from a careful examination of your own character and state of mind, you cannot flatter yourself with the persuasion of being as yet, duly prepared for an approach to the table of communion.

You therefore anxiously enquire what are those descriptions of character, which enlightened reason, and the rules of sacred Scripture, exclude from this feast of love?

"No man" says the venerable Dr. Adam Clarke, "should be permitted to approach the "table when not known to be a *steady, consis-* "*tent character,* or a *thorough penitent.* If "there be an indiscriminate admission, there "must be unworthy communicants, who in- "stead of receiving the cup of salvation, will "wring out the dregs of the cup of trembling; "for we may rest assured that this ordinance "is no *indifferent* thing. Every soul that ap- "proaches it, will either receive good, or evil "from it. He will retire a better, or a worse "man—He will either have an increase of "Christ, or of Judas. On him the Lord will "graciously smile, or judicially frown."*

There can be little doubt, I conceive but that the following classes are of the last description. 1. *Professed Infidels,*—persons who altogether disbelieve the whole of Divine revelation, or who deny the Divinity and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Happily this class of individuals are at present, neither so numerous, nor so distinguished, as they were during the last century. There are however many in every christian community, who if they do not with daring effrontery openly espouse the cause of infidelity, yet insidiously attack its fundamental doctrines, or treat with contempt its professed followers.

Persons of this character, it would be profanation, to admit to the table of the Lord.

Instead of *inviting* such to partake of this ordinance, we would say to them—"Beware,

* See Dr. Clarke's Discourses on the Eucharist, p. 86.

"stand aloof, approach not a solemn rite "which would only be the means of increasing "your guilt, and adding to the intensity of "your future punishment—No, rather go, re- "pent, believe, and obey. Examine accurately, "and candidly the nature and tendency—the "history and institution, the external and in- "ternal evidence of christianity; and should it "please heaven to enlighten your conscience, "and to *renew* your heart; then come humbly, "yet without fear, to this communion of saints; "and while angels in heaven would rejoice at "the conversion of one such sinner; believers "on earth would receive you to their fellow- "ship with cordial satisfaction."

2. A second class who without question should always be admonished to abstain from this ordinance, are, the *notoriously vicious and profane.*

Christianity is not a mere matter of *profession:* It enjoins *good works* as well as *true faith.* While it assures us that "without faith "it is impossible to please God," (Heb. xi. 6.) it as plainly declares that "without holiness "no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

Speaking of the works of the flesh, viz. of "murder, drunkenness, uncleanness, and such "like," an inspired apostle says, (Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.) "I tell you now, as I have told you "in time past, that they who do *such* things, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—And in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. v. 11.) he exhorts them in these words, "But "now I have written to you not to keep com-

"pany, if any man that is *called a brother*, be "a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or "a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, "with such an one, no *not to eat*."

But on this subject little need be said, inasmuch as it very rarely happens, unless from some motive of ambition or interest, that persons notoriously vicious, would ever *ask* admittance to the table of communion.

The palpable inconsistency between the principles of the gospel and their lives, is such, as would expose them to the just ridicule and contempt, even of their irreligious associates, should they be able to overcome the scruples of their own conscience, and the dread of that punishment which they might expect, from an unworthy participation of this solemn ordinance.

3. A third class of persons who unquestionably ought to be excluded from the Lord's table, are those who are *grossly* ignorant of the nature and design of this institution.

Children, idiots, and persons who are deficient in common understanding, are obviously included in this class. All who are incapable, from any cause, of "discerning the Lord's "body,"—of stating just reasons for wishing to be admitted to this privilege, ought to be advised to wait until by enquiry, reading and reflection, they shall have obtained right views of the ordinance.

Will it be said that ignorance of this sacred rite is often rather a *misfortune* than a fault? That there are many instances of weak, unin-

formed, but pious believers, who have faith, and love, purity of heart, and correctness of deportment; but who from being denied the means of instruction, are ignorant on this subject, and therefore ought not to be excluded from this sacred institution.

The plain answer to this objection is, that persons of this description, by proper attention and enquiry can always obtain all the information absolutely necessary for an admission to this ordinance. There are few cases that can occur where applicants of this description will not derive much advantage by delay, and where means of information are within reach, and not sought for, or used; there can be no reason for complaint if the *wilfully* ignorant are excluded from the communion.

There are not a few among illiterate believers who ignorantly or superstitiously imagine, that there is a certain *mysterious efficacy* in the ordinance itself, which will operate a change on their heart; or that there is such a degree of merit in obeying the injunction of our Lord on this subject, as will insure his favour and a title to eternal life.—Others again imagine that the simple act of communicating, seals the pardon of their offences, without any reference to previous dispositions of heart, or to the subsequent tenor of their life and conversation. Till persons of these sentiments, obtain juster views of this sacrament, they ought undoubtedly to abstain from its celebration, however correct their outward deportment may be, or whatever warmth of devotion they may experience.

4. There is another class of persons who scruple not to seek admission to this ordinance from motives of interest, or reputation, but who should assuredly be admonished to abstain from it.

Such are those, in some foreign countries, where it is made a pre-requisite to filling a civil or military office. How much this sacred institution is abused by men of loose characters and habits, by making it an instrument of accomplishing their interested or ambitious views, it is needless state.

But there are others, and of these not a few in our own country, who from motives but a little more elevated, solicit an admission to the Lord's Supper. They reside perhaps in a neighbourhood where religion is respected, where its professors are persons of high character and influence, and where *reputation* may be gained by an intimate association with the religious part of society. They accordingly persuade themselves that they are qualified for the ordinance, and that their present interest would be advanced by an admission to the communion.

To persons of this description I would say—Ah my friends, in a transaction so important as that in which you are about to engage, be cautious, reflect much, examine your motives, as well as your life; and let nothing short of love to the Redeemer—a zeal for *his* cause and for the welfare of your soul, influence you in this solemn undertaking.

5. There is another class of wavering nomi-

nal *half-way* christians, who sometimes seek admission to this ordinance. Their hearts are divided between religion and the world.—They make an idol of riches, of reputation, or sensual appetite.—They wish to serve both God and mammon, believing that there is not all that impossibility of uniting the two services which our Saviour has declared. They have been admitted into the christian church by baptism—they have been educated in its doctrines—they respect its institutions, and wish to be considered as *professors*, so far as this may consist with a supreme devotion to their temporal interest.

Persons of this class are certainly in a crooked path. They are not in that "strait and "narrow way that leads to everlasting life." Let them be decided,—let them renounce either the world, or heaven as their *portion*, "If the "Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then fol-"low him." (1 Kings xviii. 21.)

Remember that "he that wavereth is like "a wave of the sea driven with the wind and "tossed.—Let not *that* man think he shall re-"ceive any thing of the Lord; a double minded "man is unstable in all his ways." (James i. 6, 7, 8.)—When your mind is determined and you have resolved to seek heaven in preference to the world, *then come*, relying on the influences of the Holy Spirit to aid your resolution,—*then come* and partake without hesitation of the emblems of Redeeming love.

6. There is another class of persons who style themselves *rational and liberal christians*,

who ought not consistently with the sentiments of *our* church, or of any regular church in christendom, be invited to the Lord's Supper. They reject the doctrine of our Lord's divinity and atonement, a doctrine that from the origin of christianity to the present day, has been held by the *great body* of christians as a vital and essential article of faith. They attend on this sacrament as they celebrate the era of their country's independence,—the settlement of a colony, or the birth-day of some distinguished character. They commemorate our Saviour's life and virtues,—the precepts he delivered, and the example he has set. But here they stop—They do not in common with every other christian denomination regard the Lord Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away "the sins of the world." They do not believe that "on him was laid the iniquity of us all," that "he was wounded for our transgressions," that "he was bruised for our iniquities," that "the chastisement of our peace was laid on "him," and that "by his stripes we are "healed."

That "his soul was made an offering for "sin," and that "he bare the sin of many," that "his blood was shed for the remission of "sin," that "he died unto sin," that "he "gave himself for our sins," that "he came "to save sinners," that "he purged our sins "by his blood," that "he appeared to put "away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and that "he bare our sins in his own body on the "tree," that "he is the propitiation for our

"sins, and for the sins of the whole world." When we read such language as this in the charter of our salvation, and when we find the apostle Paul declaring to the Corinthians, that "by eating bread and drinking wine in com-"memoration of the Redeemer, ye do shew "forth the Lord's *death* till he come," in what light are we to regard those who deny the *efficacy* of that death, who consider the Son of God as a *mere man*, or at most, as a very exalted *super angelic Being?*

Surely there would be no propriety in soliciting the attendance of persons holding opinions like these, to a *communion of love* with christians who hold the Lord Jesus to have united in himself the Divine and human natures; and who by his death on the cross made a full atonement for the sins of all who sincerely believe, and trust on him as the *Saviour of the world.*

7. There is one other class of persons, and it is the last I shall mention, who abstain from the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and which it would be very useless to invite to this ordinance.—It is that description of Christians who deny the institution of any sacrament.—In their zeal for the establishment of a religion *purely spiritual*, they seem almost to have forgotten that man is a compound being, made up of *matter* as well as of *spirit.* They say "God "is a Spirit, and they who worship him must "worship him in Spirit and in truth."—"Why then" they ask, "should we make use "of any external symbols whatever,"—to

commemmorate the life—or death of our Lord?

The great body of the followers of Christ, from the period of his ascension to the present hour, reply in the affirmative.—The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper have been universally held to have been instituted by our Lord himself—and have been continued without interruption, and with scarce an exception, by all denominations of Christians to the present day. They are institutions admirably calculated for such a compound creature as man—They strengthen our faith by the aid of our senses, and are attended by many and great benefits, as numberless believers in all ages have felt and acknowledged.

It is not my purpose in these letters to discuss controverted points in Theology—my aim is practical. I do not therefore pretend to answer the objections that have been raised to the administration of the sacraments. They would lead into too wide a field of discussion. I appeal to the plain words of Scripture; to the simple narration of the Evangelists and the apostle Paul; and any one who is disposed to controvert what *they* have stated on this subject, would not probably be convinced with any thing short of a new Revelation.—"If "they hear not Moses and the Prophets, nei- "ther will they be persuaded, though one rose "from the dead." (Luke xvi. 31.)

I am yours truly.

LETTER XV.

My Dear Friend—

I have now stated under seven different classes, as distinctly as I could, those descriptions of persons who *ought* not, or who *need* not, be invited to a participation of the Lord's Supper. There can be no scruple in *your* mind on the question of not being included in either of these classes; your only difficulty, is in regard to your *worthiness* to approach the table of communion. You admit that you have *faith*, but you say "it is *weak*,"—that you have *love* to the Saviour, and to all whom you believe to be his *real* disciples; but that "it is *faint*,"—that you truly *repent* of your past sins; but whether this "*repentance* is unto life," you cannot say. In short you complain, that you fall so far short of that *christian perfection*, which the gospel appears to demand, that you are "*therefore*, in your own apprehension, un-"prepared to sit with the followers of Christ "at the table of communion."

My dear friend, such scruples may be indulged to an unreasonable extent. Unless confined within the limits of reason and the prescribed rules of the gospel, they would leave the communion-table with scarce an attendant.

It is a matter of much importance that every sincere and penitent believer who has a desire

to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus in this solemn ordinance, should form correct opinions on this subject. Is it then your idea that in order to partake of the Lord's Supper, the applicant should be *perfectly faultless*?

Certain it is that no professor can be *too holy*. But where is that human being to be found who is *without sin*. "If we say, we have "no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth "is not in us." (1 John ch. i. 8.)

There is not a day, not an hour of our lives, when in the full exercise of reason, in which we do not fall short of the requisition of the Divine law. But this is by no means a substantial reason why we should neglect this ordinance, any more than other Divine institutions. Our frailties and corruption should indeed humble us in our own esteem, but not sink us into despondence. We should resist and endeavour to subdue every irregular passion and habit. To our own most strenuous exertions, we should add prayer for the assistance of the Spirit of truth. This aid has been promised to all who will ask it in faith. Imperfect as our graces and our obedience may be, we need not fear a rejection from our heavenly Father, if we come through him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." A "good "and honest heart," is the soil in which the seeds of grace naturally take root, and with the diligent use of appointed means "they "will spring up and bear fruit abundantly." Our merciful Redeemer "knows our frame, "he remembers we are dust." The heavenly

"treasure," he knows we have in "earthen "vessels," and he will not assuredly exact from such imperfect beings as we are, the purity of angels.

In asking admission to the table of our Lord, it is not, that we may display *our own righteousness*, but obtain *pardon for our offences*, and "grace to help us in every time of "need." We go not to this ordinance to say with the Pharisee, "God I thank thee that I "am not like other men," but with the humble Publican, to pray, "*God be merciful to* "*me a sinner.*"

To imagine that in order *worthily* to partake of the Lord's Supper, we must be *faultless*, would be reasoning against the experience of believers in every age. Neither Abraham, nor David, nor Daniel, nor Job, under the *old*, nor the apostles of our Lord themselves under the *new* dispensation, could lay claim to perfection.

Even Judas himself, who betrayed our Lord, was admitted to the *first* celebration of this ordinance under the immediate foresight of his treachery and his final punishment. What then you will ask, are the *indispensable* qualifications for admission to the table of communion? To obviate your difficulties I will offer for your consideration the sentiments* of some eminent divines on this subject.

The qualifications for *worthily* receiving this ordinance are thus epitomized in that admirable summary of christian doctrine, the Westminster's Assembly's Shorter Catechism.

* See Catechism for youth, page 195.

"It is required of them that would worthily "partake of the Lord's Supper, that they ex- "amine themselves of their knowledge to dis- "cern the Lord's body, of their *faith* to feed "upon him; of their *repentance, love,* and *new* "*obedience;* lest coming unworthily, they eat "and drink judgment to themselves."

Professor Osterwald says, in his excellent summary of christian doctrine, "Every one "who truly believes in Christ, and repents of "sin, and sincerely wishes to advance in holi- "ness, should partake of this ordinance as one "of the principal means of advancing in the "christian life."

Bishop Gibson* in his little Manual on the Lord's Supper, is perhaps too loose on this subject. He requires neither faith, penitence, nor knowledge—His remarks are as follow.

"The preparation then, that is *absolutely* "and *indispensably* required, for the due "receiving of the blessed Sacrament, is *an* "*honest* and *sincere heart;* and without such "a heart, no office of religion whatever is duly "performed—No man comes rightly prepared "to hear the word preached but he that brings "a good and honest heart," (Luke viii. 15.) or "a heart sincerely resolved to practise what he "hears—Nor are we fit to pray to God, except "we "lift up holy hands," (1 Tim. ii. 8.) "with a sincere desire after the graces and "virtues which we pray for. So that whatever "difference men may make between receiving "the holy Sacrament, and performing the

* See page 49 of his works.

"other offices of religion; this is a certain "truth that neither hearing nor praying, nor "any other religious office can be performed "duly and with benefit, except there be an "honest and upright heart, and he who has *that*, "has the only thing that is *absolutely* and *in-* "*dispensibly* required to the worthy receiv- "ing of the holy Sacrament."

But on this important point, the pious and learned Dr. A. CLARKE, is more sound and Scriptural in his views.—"It may be asked," says he, "who then should approach this aw- "ful ordinance?"

I answer, 1. every *believer* in Christ Jesus, who is saved from his sins, has a *right* to come. Such are of the *family of God*, and this bread belongs to his children. On this there can be but one opinion. 2. Every genuine *penitent* is invited to come, and consequently has a right, because he needs atoning blood; and by this ordinance the blood shed for the remission of sins, is expressively represented. "But I am not worthy," the convert will say. And who is? There is not a saint on earth, or an archangel in Heaven who is worthy to sit down at the table of the Lord. "But does not the apostle "intimate that none but the *worthy* should "partake of it?" No—He has said nothing of the kind. He solemnly reprehends those who eat and drink *unworthily*, but there is an essential difference between eating and drinking *worthily*, and being *worthy* thus to eat and drink.

"None therefore are excluded but the *im-*

"*penitent*, the unbelieving transgressor, and "the profane. *Believers* however *weak*, have "a right to come; and the strongest in faith "need the grace of this ordinance. *Penitents* "should come, as all the promises of pardon "mentioned in the Bible are made to such. "None is *worthy* of the entertainment (though "all these will partake of it worthily,) but it is "freely provided by him, who is the Lamb of "God, who was slain for us, and who alone is "*worthy* to receive glory, majesty, dominion "and power, forever and ever."*

"But," says another excellent writer,† "we may affirm with the greatest certainty "that no serious person who sincerely wished "and endeavoured to communicate worthily, "could communicate *unworthily*. For God "accepteth a man according to what he hath. "For even when one who hath been a stranger "to religion come to the table of the Lord with "sorrow and contrition for sin, sincere purpo- "ses after amendment, and of being answera- "ble to the death of Christ; though his reli- "gion go no further at present than honest "purpose and intention; he communicates "worthily. Every one who sincerely repents "of his past transgressions, and carefully en- "deavours to bring his heart and life in con- "formity to the gospel, is within the terms of "mercy; and when he comes to the holy Sa- "crament, in obedience to the command of "Christ, as a mean of improvement in holi-

* Discourse on the Eucharist, page 88.
† Dr. Duncan's Devout Communicant.

"ness, though he be not purified to that de-
"gree he could wish; yet may be perfectly
"secure, that he cannot in any sense be said
"to eat and drink unworthily, so as to "be
"guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,"
"or to "eat and drink condemnation to him-
"self."

"Unworthy communicating must have been
"a deliberate sin, not a sin of infirmity, other-
"wise it would not have been so severely pu-
"nished as it was among the Corinthians, with
"bodily diseases and death. Nor should it
"ever be forgotten, that whatever was meant
"by recording the guilt and danger of un-
"worthy communicating, the apostle could
"not have intended by it to terrify any person
"from coming to the Lord's Supper, but only
"to make christians more circumspect in their
"approaches to it: for in the very next words
"after speaking of being "guilty of the body
"and blood of the Lord," he adds, "but let
"a man examine himself, and so let him eat of
"that bread and drink of that cup."

Combining together the substance of what has been stated above, it cannot be difficult for any one who is truly desirous of becoming a communicant, to ascertain whether he is in a state that will authorize his partaking with propriety of this ordinance—Let him ask himself as in the presence of God, with reference to a final judgment, whether he sincerely believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great sacrifice for human guilt, and trusts in his righteousness and atonement for salvation:

whether he feels "the love of Christ constrain-"ing him to depart from what is evil, and to "practice what is good;" whether he sincerely repents of past offences against God and man, whether he resolves, (Divine grace assisting him) that he will conform in his life and temper with the principles of the gospel, whether he believes the sacred Scriptures to be given by divine inspiration, and regards them as the infallible rule of his faith and practice.

Having these few plain principles for his guide, and having resolved to pursue a conduct that will correspond with them, he need not hesitate on the question of enlisting under the banner of the cross, assured that he will receive all that aid from above, which will be necessary to "fight the good fight of faith," and to "come off more than conqueror through "him that loved us." (Rom. viii. 37.)

I remain as ever,

Respectfully yours, &c.

LETTER XVI.

My Dear Friend—

I rejoice that your difficulties begin to vanish; that your scruples are in a measure removed, and that you have no longer

those appalling fears in relation to the consequences of partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with outhaving attained that imaginary perfection which you once thought indispensible to the *worthy* receiving of it. I am glad to find that those expressions in the Epistles of the apostle Paul to the Corinthian and Hebrew converts no longer make you "*shudder with horror* at the bare contem- "plation of the penalties of an *unworthy* com- "munion." Believe it, this ordinance was never intended to be a "stumbling-block," or an object of terror. It is a "feast of love," it is a communion of christian sympathy, like Jacob's ladder—It is a delightful medium of intercourse between heaven and earth—It often raises the affections above terrestrial objects, and gives the believer a foretaste of the joys of paradise.

Why then longer delay an approach to this sacred ordinance? You answer, that you cannot venture in your present state of *ignorance* respecting this holy Sacrament—that you doubt whether you have that *knowledge* of it, which will enable you to "discern the Lord's body," and you express an "anxious desire" to be better informed respecting the *nature, design,* and *benefits* of this ordinance.

On this subject my dear friend, much has been written, and there are many excellent treatises containing information far more extensive than any thing I can pretend to offer. I cannot however refuse the request you make, but will very cheerfully assist you by abridg-

ing within as short a compass as I can, whatever I find in those books I have at hand, that contain what I regard, as most important on this interesting subject.

In order fully to comprehend the nature and design of the sacred ordinance, the first enquiry to which our attention should be directed is, the true meaning of the highly figurative language, which our Lord uses in relation to it.

When he had "taken bread" says the Evangelist Mark, "he blessed, and brake it, and "gave to them (the apostles) and said, take, "eat, *this is my body*. And he took the cup, "and when he had given thanks, he gave it to "them, and they all drank of it; and he said "unto them, *this is my blood of the New Testa-"ment*, (covenant,) which is shed for many."

About a year prior to the institution of this Sacrament, our Lord addressing himself to a mixed assembly of Jews, referring no doubt to his approaching death on the cross, says "I am "the bread of life. He that *cometh* to me shall "never hunger, and he that *believeth* on me "shall never *thirst*."

And immediately after he says, "verily "verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on "me, *hath* everlasting life. I am that bread "of life; I am the living bread that came down "from heaven. If a man eat of this bread he "shall live for ever, and the bread that I will "give him is my flesh, which I will give for "the life of the world."

"The Jews therefore strove among them-

"selves saying, "how can this man give us his "flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat "the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his "blood, ye have no life in you; Whoso eateth "my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal "life,—not as your fathers did eat manna in "the wilderness and are dead—he that eateth "this bread shall live forever."

This language is highly figurative; but it is deeply interesting.—Literally to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Saviour, we know is an impossibility. When he brake the bread before his apostles and said, "this is my body," they could not have misunderstood him. His body was then before their eyes unbroken, and entire. When he took the cup and said, "this "is my blood of the New Testament, which "is shed for many,"—it was most evident to the senses of the apostles, that not a drop of his blood had then been shed. They must have considered these emblems as pre-signifying events that were to happen.

In like manner when he said to his disciples, "I am the door,"—"I am the good Shepherd," —"I am the vine; ye are the branches:" he spoke according to the figurative style of speech, then so common throughout the East. On some occasions this language appears to have been too ambiguous for the apprehension of his hearers. As when he said, (probably pointing to his own body,) "Destroy this tem- "ple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews mistaking his meaning replied,— "Forty and six years was this temple in build-

" ing, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"
" But he spake," says the Evangelist, " of the
" temple of his body."

In like manner he was misapprehended by the woman of Samaria, when he conversed with her respecting " the living water which " he should give, of which, whoever should " drink, would never thirst again."

So also, after the remarkable discourse recorded in the 6th, chap. of St. John's gospel, " many of his disciples, are said to have gone " back, and walked no more with him."

Happily for believers at subsequent periods, the meaning of our Lord need not to be misunderstood, where he discourses of " eating his " flesh, and drinking his blood."

By this metaphorical language, he designed no doubt, to instruct us, that by *faith* we are to feed on him—that by meditating devoutly on his death and resurrection, we should thence derive that knowledge, and kindle those affections, which are necessary for the life and nourishment of our souls.—That in his death we are to contemplate the sacrifice made for our guilt, and the means of reconciliation, and peace with our heavenly Father.—That here we have a *pledge* of our own resurrection, and of our admission to the Paradise of God, when removed from this scene of temptation, of suffering, and sin.—That from the contemplation of his atoning death, our souls are to be nourished with that *hope* and *faith*, that will enable us to overcome the world, and that will continue till the close of life, a never failing

source of the most precious, and heart-soothing consolations.

Such are the views which Christians in the the first ages of the church had of these memmorable words of our Lord.

TERTULLIAN thus explains them—"In or-"der," says he "to have life, we must seek "the word that was made flesh—We must "*feed* on it by *hearing*,—we must *masticate* it "by *meditation*,—and *digest* it by *faith*."

ORIGEN says, that the words above quoted from the Evangelist John, are "the letter that "kills, if taken in a literal sense,"—and ST. AUGUSTINE observes, "that whenever the words "of our Lord *appear* to enjoin the commission "of a crime, when taken in a *literal* sense, we "should understand them *figuratively*;" and brings as an example, the words already referred to.

An ingenious author, who published a few years since a treatise* on the Lord's Supper, has endeavoured to illustrate this figurative language of our Lord, in two dialogues between a father and his son. He maintains that by "eating the flesh, and drinking the blood, of "the Lord Jesus Christ," is meant "the soul's "subsisting on his *Divine love*, and *Divine* "*wisdom*; and that these divine principles "are intended to be received by man, who for "that end is endowed with the two receptive "faculties, the *will* and the *understanding*—

* See a Tract entitled the "The True End and Design of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." By John Clowe, Rector of St. John's Church, Manchester.

" the will to receive *love*, and the understand-
" ing to receive *wisdom*; and that whoever
" thus receives *love* and *wisdom*, at the same
" time, receives Jesus Christ and his life,—and
" together therewith all the blessings of Re-
" demption."

In support of this opinion he states that " *God* is declared by an inspired apostle, to " be " *Love*," and that our Lord proclaimed " himself to be, " the light of the world."— " That we are taught that " man shall not " live by bread alone, but by every *word* that " proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"—that, " we are instructed,—" to labour not for the " meat that perisheth, but for that which en-" dureth to everlasting life."—That our Lord " pronounced a blessing on those who " *hun-" ger and thirst* after righteousness," and de-" clared, that it was " *his meat* to do the will " of him who sent him."—That in these words " we are taught plainly what those *good* and " substantial objects are, that yield whole-" some nourishment to the Spirit.—That they " are the *Divine love* and *Divine wisdom* of " Jesus Christ and his word.—All the *good-" ness and truth* of God, therefore, whether " manifested in his word, or in his works, is " the proper and wholesome food of man's " spirit."*

The preceding observations I trust will be considered as sufficiently explanatory of our Lord's meaning, at the first institution of his Supper, when he said of the bread, " this is

* See Clowe's Treatise on the Sacrament, p. 30, 34.

"my body—take, eat,"—and of the wine, "this is the New Testament in my blood—"drink ye all of it"—or as he elsewhere declares, "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."—These material emblems were certainly intended to signify that spiritual food, which when received by faith, nourishes the soul to everlasting life.

I am yours very truly.

LETTER XVII.

My Dear Friend—

Having in a former letter collected within as short a compass as I could, consistently with perspicuity, the account of the original institution of the Lord's Supper, as recorded by three Evangelists, and the apostle Paul; and having in my last letter endeavoured to explain the figurative language used by our Lord himself, in relation to this ordinance, I proceed in conformity with your request, to illustrate more fully its *nature and design.*

As this sacrament was instituted on the very night on which the Jewish Passover was annually observed,—as it resembles it in many striking particulars, and as it appears evidently

to have been designed as a substitute, in place of the Mosaic rite; we shall find it instructive and useful, to review the circumstances and design of this ancient ceremony.

Four hundred and thirty years had now elapsed from the calling of Abraham; and two hundred and fifteen from the migration of the children of Israel, to the land of Egypt. Within this period, the memory of Joseph and of his services had no doubt been lost—The descendants of himself and of his brethren, remained a distinct people. Their occupation was principally grazing, which was held in great contempt by the Egyptians. The Israelites were accordingly treated with great cruelty by their masters. But though oppressed, they increased in number with such astonishing rapidity, that the king of Egypt became fearful, lest in case of war between him and any of the neighbouring kings, these strangers might join his enemies; and "so get them "(the Israelites) up out of the land." He therefore, "set task masters over them, to af- "flict them with burdens; and made them "serve with rigour." He "made their lives "bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in "brick, and in all manner of service in the "field,—*all* their service was with rigour." (Exod. i. 14.)

But as these despised strangers continued to multiply notwithstanding the oppression they underwent; the king of Egypt proceeded one step further in cruelty and passed an edict, directing all the male Hebrew children to be put to death. To give effect to this law, he or-

dered all *his own* people saying, "Every "(Jewish) *son* that is born, ye shall cast into "the river; but every *daughter* ye shall save "alive." (Exod. i. 22.)

Under circumstances of such enormous cruelty on the part of the oppressors, and of intolerable misery on the part of the oppressed; JEHOVAH took compassion on the children of Israel, and determined to deliver them by the agency of his servant *Moses*. Accordingly HE appeared to this chosen instrument, saying, "I have surely seen the affliction of my peo- "ple which are in Egypt, and have heard "their cry by reason of their task-masters, for "I know their sorrows, and I am come down "to deliver them from the hands of the Egyp- "tians, and to bring them up out of that land, "unto a good land, and a large;—unto a land "flowing with milk and honey.—Come now "therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh "that thou mayest bring forth my people, the "children of Israel, out of Egypt."—(Exod. iii. 7, 10.)

Moses, at the command of GOD, went accordingly to Pharaoh, to persuade him to let the children of Israel depart peaceably from his territory. But the king's heart was hardened by avarice. He had found the service of the Israelites too profitable to be gratuitously surrendered—He accordingly refused to let them go. But the measure was already determined by unerring Wisdom, and almighty power insured its accomplishment. Various plagues were miraculously inflicted

on him and on his people, to subdue their opposition. They still however resisted, till finally at the command of God, *his own*, and the first-born of the whole nation of the Egyptians, were slain in one night by a destroying messenger from heaven. When this tremendous blow was struck, the children of Israel were specially exempted from its effects. While the first-born of their oppressors were destroyed, theirs were continued in life.

In commemoration of so signal a deliverance, *the feast of the Passover was instituted.*

This rite was to be perpetual. "Thou shalt "therefore keep this ordinance," says the almighty Lawgiver, to Moses, "in his season "from year to year,"—"thou shalt observe "this thing as an ordinance to thee and to "thy sons *forever*—and it shall be for a *sign* "unto thee, upon thy hand, and for a *memo-* "*rial* between thine eyes, that the Lord's "law may be in thy mouth; for with a strong "hand hath the Lord brought thee out of "Egypt."

The *manner* in which this ordinance was kept, was as follows. "On* the *tenth* of the "month *Nisan* (which answers to our March) "every family in Israel; (or if the family "was too small, two neighbouring families "joined together,) was directed to take a *male* "*lamb*, or kid (for the original signifies either,) "under a year old, and *without blemish*. This "was to be shut up until the *fourteenth* day "of the month, when it was to be killed in the "evening."

* See Stackhouse, p. 375.

"They were then to take a bunch of hys-
"sop, and dipping it in the blood, they were
"to strike it on the two side posts, and the
"upper door posts, of every house where
"they ate it; and so not stir out till morning.
"This lamb was to be dressed *whole*—roasted;
"not boiled, because roasting was a speedier
"way of dressing it. But it was to be roasted
"thoroughly, because it was *all* to be eaten;
"not a bone of it was to be broken; and if any
"remained it was to be burned; for it was for-
"bidden to suffer this sacred victim to putrify.

"It was to be eaten *standing, and in haste*—
"to represent the circumstances of persons
"just beginning a journey.—With *bitter herbs,*
"to recall the bitter servitude of Egypt,—
"with *unleavened bread,*—in memory of their
"deliverance being so sudden that they had
"not time to leaven their bread for their jour-
"ney.—It was necessary that not less than ten,
"(as Josephus informs us) nor more than
"twenty should celebrate this feast together."

By some of the early fathers of the Christian church, the very form of benediction and praise which was anciently used in the celebration of this solemnity, has been preserved.

*"Blessed," said the observers of this rite,
"be the Lord the Sovereign of the world,
"who has redeemed us from Egypt—us, and
"our fathers; and who has commanded us this
"night to eat a lamb and unleavened bread."

It was their practice during the days of unleavened bread, to invite the nearest relations

* See Durand sur la Sainte Cene. p. 150.

to the feast, and at the close of the same, the best bread was brought, which the master of the family broke, and distributed to *each* of his guests. In doing this he said, "This is the "bread of affliction which our fathers ate in "Egypt;"—He then took the cup of wine of which after he had drank, all the company who had been circumcised, drank also—He then returned thanks, after which he recalled to their remembrance the circumstances of their deliverance from Egyptian servitude; and they closed the ceremony with a hymn, or psalm.

Justin Martyr has preserved the ancient formula of the Passover as used by the Jews in the time of Esdras. "*This passover,*" said they, "is our *Saviour and Refuge*—signifying without doubt that these were the *symbols* of their servitude and deliverance—and not literally, that the *bread of affliction* was their Saviour and Refuge."

"This ordinance is still observed by the "Jews in every part of the world—After giving thanks to God, the bread is broken and "divided—and the cup, after the blessing, is "handed round among the guests."—Mr. Clarkson in his "portraiture of Quakerism"* gives a very exact account of the manner in which the Jews now perform this ceremony, which corresponds in most particulars to the ancient form.

I am yours, &c.

* See Vol. II. p. 342.

LETTER XVIII.

My Dear Friend—

Having taken a view of the leading circumstances connected with the Jewish Passover, let us view it in connection with those that accompanied the institution of the Lord's Supper. That our Lord intended this ordinance to be a substitute in place of the Mosaic rite, there can be little doubt; and that there are many striking points of resemblance between the two institutions seems to be equally clear.

The apostle Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (ch. v. 7, 8.) says, "purge out "therefore the *old leaven*, that ye may be a "*new lump*, as ye are unleavened—For even "*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;* "therefore let us keep the *feast*, not with the "leaven of malice and wickedness; but with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

And the apostle Peter in his First Epistle speaks of "the sprinkling of the blood of "Christ,"—and again, of our being "re- "deemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of "a lamb without blemish, and without spot." (1 Pet. i. 19.)

It will be at once gratifying and instructive to recapitulate some of the most striking coincidences between the Jewish and the Christain passover.

1. The Jewish passover was first celebrated on the night previous to the departure of the children of Israel, from Egypt.

The Lord's Supper was first celebrated on the very eve prior to his crucifixion, and departure from this world to his native Heaven.

They were both instituted on the same day of the month and the year.

2. The paschal lamb, used on these occasions was to be without "*blemish or spot.*"

Our Lord is referred to, as *such* a lamb, by St. Peter in the passage cited above.

3. This lamb was to be slain on the 14th day of the month *Nisan*, about the beginning of the evening sacrifice, (namely from three to five o'clock, agreeably to our reckoning of time.)

Our Lord expired about the 6th, hour, says the evangelist—that is about *three* o'clock, according to our time.

4. The blood of the paschal lamb was to be *sprinkled* on the door posts, of the houses of the Israelites.

Thus our Lord's blood is styled by an apostle, "*the* "*blood of sprinkling*, that "speaketh better things than "that of Abel," and again he says, "having our hearts "*sprinkled* from an evil con- "science." (Heb. x. 22. xii. 24.

5. Every member of a Jewish family was commanded to eat the flesh of the paschal lamb.

So our Lord directs *all* his followers *spiritually* to eat his flesh, as a condition of inheriting eternal life.

6. No part of the paschal lamb was suffered to become putrid, what was not eaten was to be consumed with fire.

So our Lord's body, agreeably to prophecy, was not permitted to see corruption.

7. The paschal lamb was roasted entire,—not a bone of it was to be broken.

So not a bone of our Lord was broken on the cross; while the limbs of both of those who were crucified with him, were broken.

8. The Jews did not celebrate the passover as a common meal.—Ten or more always assembled for the purpose, and partook of it with solemnity, as a memorial of their deliverance from the servitude of Egypt.

So also it has been the constant practice of christians to celebrate this ordinance together, in memory of their deliverance from the greater servitude of sin.

9. The Jews celebrated

Christians are admonished

their passover with *unleavened bread.*

10. The symbols used in the passover were *bread and wine*, and *bitter herbs.*

11. No person could partake of the paschal lamb, unless he had first been circumcised.

12. The Jews were directed to observe the passover "*forever*," that is, so long as their œconomy should last.

13. It always was, and still is the practice of the Jews, before and after the celebration of this rite, to *give thanks.*

to "keep *their* feast, not with "the *old leaven* of *malice or* "*hypocrisy*; but with the *un-*"*leavened bread* of *sincerity* "*and truth.*"

Christians use the same emblems, but their *bitter herbs*, are *penitence and humility.*

So among christians no person can be properly admitted to the Lord's Supper, unless subsequently to being baptised.

Christians are directed to celebrate the Lord's Supper, as a memorial of Christ's death, "*until he shall come* "*again*" to judgment.

So our Saviour when he had taken bread he *blessed*, (not the *bread*, but) *God*; hence this Sacrament has been called by christians—The *Eucharist*; that is an ordinance in which God is bessed, or praised.

"The many resembling circumstances, real "and verbal abundantly show, (says Dr. A. "Clarke,) that the *holy Eucharist* was in a "great measure copied from the *paschal feast*, "and was intended to *supply its place*, only "heightening the design, and improving the "application."

The great object of both the institutions, is to serve as a memorial of a great deliverance; the one from temporal, the other from spiritual and eternal servitude.

The co-incidences we have noticed above are certainly very striking—But it is obvious how much superior of the two, is the christian ordinance in simplicity, as well as in the objects it is intended to commemorate.

Under the Mosaic dispensation there were many feasts and ceremonies; but none were regarded as so solemn, or so binding on the people, as those of circumcision and the passover. In place of the former, under the christian dispensation, baptism has been introduced, and in place of the latter, the *Lord's Supper*.

It is so called from being the last meal our Saviour ate with his apostles, prior to the termination of his ministry on earth. It is also called a *sacrament* from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which signifies the military oath taken by the Roman soldiers, when they enlisted under their commanders.

The very *form* and *matter* of this oath, (as taken by the soldiers of *Republican* Rome) are both preserved in Polybius; and a careful view of them cannot fail to cast much light on the subject now under consideration.

In giving an account of the manner of raising, embodying and enrolling the Roman troops he observes—that when all the arrangements were made, and the different companies formed, the *Chiliarch*, or military tribune, selecting a proper person from all the rest, propounded the *sacramentum*, or oath of fidelity and obedience, who immediately swore as follows.

"Submissively to obey and perform whatever was commanded by the officers, according to the uttermost of his power."

"The rest all coming forward one by one take successively the same oath, that they

"would perform every thing according to what "the first had sworn."*

"Under the *Imperial* form of government, "the Roman soldier," (says Mr. Gibbon,) "in "his first entrance into service, had an oath "*(sacramentum,)* administered to him with "every circumstance of solemnity. He pro- "mised never to desert his standard—to sub- "mit his own will, to the commands of his "leaders,—and to sacrifice his life for the "safety of the Emperor and the Empire."†

So also the Roman Historian Pliny, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan states, that the christians in his province [Bithynia,] "when "they came together on a set and solemn day, "(probably the Lord's day,) having sung a "hymn—*bound themselves by an oath, (se "obstringere sacramento,)* not to commit any "wickedness," &c.

When Cataline the famous Roman conspirator, was making his arrangements to usurp the supreme authority of Rome; having assembled his associates and made a speech to them, in order, says the Historian,‡ "to bind his fel- "low conspirators by *an oath,* he is said to "have obliged them to drink wine, mingled "with human blood; handed round in bowls; "which when they had done, *as was the prac- "tice at sacred solemnities,* he disclosed his "plans to them; that so apprized of the solemn

* Dr. A. Clarke on the Eucharist, page 77.

† See Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 1. page 16.

‡ Sullust Bil. Cap. Sect. 3.

"transaction in which they had been engaged, "they might be more faithful to each other."

It seems from this allusion to *the practice at sacred solemnities*, that it was customary on some occasions for the people to mingle the blood of the victim, with the wine then used.

As an *emblem* of the blood of the "Lamb "that taketh away the sins of the world," Christians take the sacramental wine, as directed by their Master, they *all* drink of it, as a sacred pledge of their attachment and fidelity to *him*, and to each other.

This ordinance is also called *the communion*, inasmuch as it is the *medium* of communion between God and the soul; and of that intimate and affectionate communion which ought to subsist between fellow christians.—"The cup "of blessing which we bless," says the apostle Paul, "is it not the *communion* of the blood "of Christ? the bread which we break, is it "not the *communion* of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.)

"In celebrating this ordinance," says an eloquent Divine*—"we are not only more "closely cementing the ties of nature and the "bands of friendship among ourselves, but we "are extending our *communion* to the church "of Christ universal; in the East and West, "in the South and North,—we are stretching "out the hand of fellowship over continents, "over oceans, to give the salvation of bro-"therly love, to all who love our Lord Jesus: "and to invite men of all colours, and of all

* See Hunter's Sacred Biography, vol. 4. page 166.

"languages, to cast in their lot among us, and "to take shelter with us, under the shadow of "this "great rock in a weary land;"—to re- "pose with us amidst the "trees of life, whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations."

"But is not our communion also with "the "Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ?" Is "it not with *them* who are drinking new wine "in our Father's kingdom?—with the spirits "of just men made perfect—with those whom "on earth we have loved; with those who "have often eaten and drank with us at the "table of the Lord—and with whom we hope "to eat and drink at the table that is above, "sitting down with them, and with Abraham, "Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven? "Delightful reflection! The employments of "earth and heaven are the same—the ani- "mating principle,—the spirit of love—the "subject of their praise, and the source of their "joy is the same."

It is also styled a *covenant*—Thus our Lord when he instituted the ordinance says, "This "cup is the New *Testament*,—(or more pro- "perly the new *covenant*,) in my blood." (Matt. xxvi. 29.)

In like manner baptism is denominated by the apostle Peter—"The *answer* (that is, "the engagement, or pledge") of a good con- "science toward God." (1 Pet. iii. 21.)

By theologians, this sacrament is generally styled a *sign*, or *seal* of the *covenant* between God and the believer. "On *our* part" says Bishop Gibson, "it is pleading before God the

"merits and efficacy of Christ's death for the "pardon of our past sins, and for grace to "avoid them for the time to come; and on "God's part, it is a conveying and *sealing* of "those benefits to every penitent and faithful "receiver."* "The Lord's Supper," says Mr. Willison,† "is called a *seal* of the *cove-* "*nant* of grace, because like a *sealed* charter "it confirms and assures to us the certainty of "the covenant and all its promised blessings— "that God, in and through Christ, is willing "to be a God to us, and to take us for his "people."

Perhaps it may more correctly be viewed as a *permanent memorial* of the *ratification* of that *new alliance*—(as it is uniformily called in the French translation of the New Testament,) between God and man, to which the apostle Paul refers in his Epistle to the Hebrews, as having been promised by God to the Jews at the advent of the Messiah. "This is "the *covenant*, (the *alliance* or *agreement*) I "will make with them.—After those days "saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their "hearts; and in their minds I will write them, "and their sins and iniquities will I remember "no more." (Heb. x. 16.)—Such is the *sub-* *stance* of the *new covenant*, (or alliance,) of which the apostle has given merely an epitome, and which you will find more fully stated by the prophet Jeremiah. (Chap. xxxi. 31—35.)

Of this new covenant, the Lord's Supper

* See Gibson on the Sacrament, &c. p. 26.
† See Young Communicant's Catechism. p. 21.

may properly be considered as a *token*, or *memorial*.

Thus when God made a covenant with Noah, that he would no more deluge the earth with water, he appointed the *rainbow* as a "token" or memorial, of this agreement; so that whenever afterwards beheld, it might remind Noah and his posterity, of the Creator's promise. (Gen. viii. 8—18.)

So also when God instituted the rite of circumcision, he declared to Abraham that it should be a *token*, (or memorial,) of *his covenant* that he should be "the father of many "nations," as also with his seed after him in their generations; it should be "the token of "an everlasting covenant, that he would be a "God to him, and to his seed after him; and "that he would give them the land of Canaan "for an everlasting possession." (Gen. xvii. 1—9.)

But this subject requires further illustration. I will discuss it at greater length, when I come more particularly to consider the *nature* of this ordinance, as the memorial of a *propitiatory sacrifice* made by the Lord Jesus Christ for human guilt.

I remain as ever,
Yours truly.

LETTER XIX.

My Dear Friend—

In order truly to "discern the "Lord's body," in this sacrament it is indispensably necessary to comprehend its *nature and design.*

One excellent writer* thus describes it—"The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the "gospel appointed by Jesus Christ to preserve "in christians a perpetual remembrance of his "death; and to make us partakers of the "benefits of it."

Another Divine† says, "It is a religious "eating of bread and drinking of wine accord-"ing to Christ's institution and example in re-"membrance of his death and sufferings for "us."

Professor Osterwald defines it to be "a holy "institution, in which christians eat bread, and "drink wine, in remembrance of Jesus Christ, "and of his death."

And Mr. Stackhouse on this point, observes, "That we do therein gratefully commemorate "the sacrifice of Christ's death, and by re-"newed acts of faith, present *that* to God as "*our* sacrifice, in the memorial of it, which he "himself hath appointed; hereby confirming "our covenant with God, and sharing in the

* Bishop Gibson. † Mr. Willison's Catechism. p. 23.

"blessed effects of that death which our Lord "suffered for us.—"*This*" says our author, "*is the whole intention of the institution.*"*

In our enquiry into the nature of this ordinance, it is obvious then that we must go one step higher, and enquire into the *origin of sacrifices*—Whence the impression came which seems to have so generally existed, and which still exists, among mankind; that the blood of victims must be shed to propitiate an offended Deity, can be only rationally accounted for, on the ground of its having been transmitted by tradition from Noah, and his descendants.

The sacrifice of animals, as substitutes for human offenders, has been practised from the most remote antiquity, and among the most enlightened heathen nations, as well as among the Jews. This is no matter of doubt—All nations seemed to have acted on the principle stated by the Apostle Paul, "that without "shedding of blood," there was "no remis-"sion" (of sin.)—But you will ask, *whence* this universal impression,—this uninterrupted practice?

Setting aside the light of Divine Revelation, this problem is not to be solved by the utmost stretch of human reason or ingenuity. The existence and the continuance of sacrifices among the Jews, we know had a plain reference to the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross; and unconnected with that, they appear to be nothing but unmeaning ceremony, and cruel superstition.

* Stackhouse's Body of Divinity, p. 619.

Instead of resorting to Commentators or to systematic treatises on theology, for the illustration of the origin and meaning of sacrifices, I will transcribe for your information some very striking remarks on this subject, by the late pious and venerable Dr. Boudinot. They are contained in a loose manuscript, which I met with among his papers,—and which appears to be the substance of a letter designed for the information of some friend, or relative, who was desirous of joining in the communion of the church.—His remarks are as follow.—

"The whole plan of salvation for fallen "man, being founded on the sacrifice and "atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, the se- "cond Person in the adorable Trinity; it is "necessary that the practical nature of sacri- "fices before the incarnation, as used by Jew "and Gentile, should be understood."

"No sooner had man fallen, and become "separated from his Creator by wicked works, "than the glad tidings of a Saviour, to come "in the flesh, was revealed to him by the in- "finite mercy of God. This was attended with "the intimation of the divine will in what "manner it should be continued in the world, "till verified by the actual coming of the Mes- "siah. This was to be by the blood of a vic- "tim offered on the altar in their public wor- "ship, thus holding up to all mankind a type "of the sufferings and death, of the incarnate "Messiah for the sins of man; and thus, from "the exclusion of Adam from Paradise, esta- "blishing the doctrine that "without shedding "of blood there was no remission of sin."

"This is apparent from Adam and Eve be-
"ing clothed in the skins of beasts, which could
"only have been obtained from the beasts of-
"fered in sacrifice. Shortly after, we find Cain
"and Abel offering their sacrifices at set times,
"or on the sabbath.—At this early period we
"find the perverseness of the human heart, re-
"fusing obedience to the will of God, and
"submission to his positive ordinance.—While
"Abel, obedient to the divine command, and
"in full confidence of the promised Saviour,
"offered a *bloody victim*,—a lamb or a kid;
"Cain could not see why the labours of his
"hands should not be equally acceptable with
"the firstlings of Abel's flock; and therefore
"refusing a compliance with the positive ordi-
"nance of the Creator, brought of the fruits
"of the earth, a *bloodless* offering, merely of
"gratitude to God."

"It pleased God to make known his dis-
"pleasure by accepting Abel's offering, pro-
"bably by fire from heaven, consuming it;
"and to reject Cain's offering by taking no
"notice of it. Cain still obstinately bent in
"opposition to the divine will, instead of turn-
"ing his vengeance on himself, and repenting
"of his sins, revenged himself, by the murder
"of his brother. Hence the apostle says, "by
"*faith* Abel offered a more acceptable sacri-
"fice than Cain."

"From that time all nations however ignorant
"of their design, continued to offer daily sacri-
"fices for the forgiveness of sins."

"The Jewish nation only preserved the spiri-

" tual meaning of this rite, and kept up the " knowledge of the thing signified thereby. By " this they held up to view the coming of the " promised Messiah in the flesh;—of that great " sacrifice by which "life and immortality were " to be brought to light," and repentance, and " forgiveness of sins, granted to all who should " believe on him. In order therefore to under- " stand the *nature and design* of the Lord's " Supper, it is necessary to know something of " the true object, pre-figured by the sacrifice of " animals.—We may learn the Jewish practice " from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. I " shall cite but a few texts. When Moses's fa- " ther-in-law came to him, " he took a burnt- " offering, and sacrifices for God,"—" And " Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to " *eat bread before the Lord.*" (Exod. xviii. 12.) " Saul and his servant met some young women " going to draw water, who told them that Sa- " muel was come to the city, and they asked the " maidens, " is the *Seer* here? And they an- " swered them and said, Behold he is before " you, make haste now, for he came to day to " the city; for there is a sacrifice of the peo- " ple to-day, in the high-place; as soon as ye " be come into the city, ye shall straitway " find him, before he go up to the high-place " *to eat;* for the people will not eat till he " come, *because he doth bless the sacrifice.*" (1 Sam. ix. 11, 12. 13.)

" While the Jews were in the wilderness, they " were not allowed to eat any meat at their pri- " vate tables, unless they had first sacrificed it

"to God at the tabernacle." (Lev. xvii. 4, 5.) "Whatsoever man there be of the house of "Israel, that killeth a lamb or a goat, or an "ox, within the camp, or without the camp, "and bringeth it not to the door of the taber- "nacle, to offer an offering to the Lord, blood "shall be imputed to him." So it is observed by many of the Jewish authors, that God commanded at first that all which the Israelites did eat, should be *peace-offerings;* but when they came into the land of Canaan, and were dispersed to great distances; this was altered, (as in Deut. xii. 21.) St. Paul confirms this doctrine, "We have an altar whereof they "have no right to eat, that serve the taberna- "cle." (or Jewish Temple.) (Heb. xiii. 10.)

The Heathens in the worship of their deities did the same. A learned Rabbi says, in speaking of the heathen sacrifices, "In those "ancient times whosoever sacrificed to idols, "made a *feast upon the sacrifice.*" This custom is often referred to, in the New Testament, "For if any man see *thee*" says St. Paul, "which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the "idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him "which is weak, be emboldened to eat those "things which are offered to idols?" (1 Cor. viii. 10.)—In another place, he says, "Our "fathers were all baptized unto Moses in the "cloud and in the sea; (a type of our christian "baptism) and did eat the same spiritual meat, "(the manna,) and did all drink the same "spiritual drink;" (the water that followed them from the rock,) typical of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

These *feasts* then were the proper sacraments, joined with sacrifices.

Thus it appears that both with Pagans and Jews, it was among their most solemn rites to join *feasting*, with *sacrifices;* and to eat of those things that had been offered up.

This being the case; what infinite love does the Saviour manifest to his people, in remembering them in the midst of the agonies of the cross; in making such a glorious provision for their necessities, that, as he had offered himself once for all, a sacrifice and oblation not to be repeated; that he should permit them as it were, to feast continually on that sacrifice in a spiritual manner; by adopting bread and wine, not as his body and blood, which in itself would have been impossible; but as *striking memorials* of them, that being spiritually received, they should have all the efficacy of actually eating the sacrifice, and thereby should become a blessed "feast of fat things," to the nourishment and growth in grace of all his servants in this vale of tears; and moreover should show forth his death to a guilty world, till his second coming in glory.

The apostle assures us, (1 Cor. v. 7.) that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: there-"fore let us keep the *feast* with the unleavened "bread of sincerity and truth."—So that by this we are taught that the eating and drinking of the memorials of the body and blood of Christ, who was offered up to God on the cross for us; as we do in the Lord's Supper, is a real communication in his death and sufferings.

And again, as all who ate of the sacrifice among both Jews and Heathens were accounted partakers of the altar—that is, *of the sacrifice offered on the altar;* we are hence fully taught, that to eat and drink the memorials of his body and blood, which Christ has appointed by this positive institution, is to be made partakers of his sacrifice offered up to God for us; in like manner as to eat of the Jewish sacrifices under the law, was to partake in the legal sacrifices themselves.

So to eat of things offered up in sacrifice to idols in the apostle's opinion, was to be made partakers of the idol sacrifices, and therefore unlawful. For the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, but *Christ's* body and blood were offered up in sacrifice unto God; and therefore they could not partake of both together (innocently;) "Ye can-"not drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup "of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the "Lord's table, and the table of devils."

The conclusion is therefore strong, that the Lord's Supper is the same thing among christians, in relation to the christian sacrifice, that the *feasts upon the legal sacrifices*, were among the Jews. It is not a sacrifice or oblation renewed from time to time; but a *feast upon a sacrifice*, already offered up, and according to TERTULLIAN, "not the offering of "something on an altar; but the eating of some-"thing which comes from God's altar, and is "set on our tables." So St. Paul calls that of

the Pagan, instead of the *altar* of devils, the "*table* of devils."

Wherefore we conclude that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the gospel, the same as baptism, hearing the word, offering public homage and adoration to the great *Jehovah*, at the appointed time; and singing his praises calculated to lead us to *Jesus Christ*, and make us partakers in his atonement and intercession, being actually thereby considered as his disciples; fighting under his banner, and participating of himself in the sacrifice once offered up, for the sins of all men. By this we become united to him through faith, and live to his glory.

But it may be said,—"who is sufficient for "these things?" and is there not danger of coming under the condemnation mentioned by St. Paul?

This depends on the spirit and temper of the worshipper. If he comes with an hypocritical temper, in order "to be seen of men," or allows himself in the practice of any known and habitual sin—If he does not seek after the life of Christ in his soul, and cherish a desire to be joined to the Lord; he is not only in danger of, but certainly will incur that guilt, in like manner as he would have done in case of the like conduct in any other ordinance of the gospel. We are expressly commanded that "whether we eat or drink, or whatever we "do, to do all to the glory of God."—If then we wilfully neglect our duty, and instead of living agreeably to the commands of our Lord,

seek to live only for our ourselves, to gratify our pride, our sensuality, or our covetousness; our exclusion from heaven is certain. But if we sin reluctantly, through infirmity, or extreme temptation, and sincerely repent of our sins, and do what we can, to avoid future offences; we are assured that "we have an advocate with the Father; even Jesus Christ "the righteous," and that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, "who live after the Spirit, and not after the "flesh."

I am your's truly.

LETTER XX.

My Dear Friend—

After the foregoing interesting article from the pen of the late venerable President of the American Bible Society, I know not whether you will ask for further information on the subject of the last letter.

As this is a matter of vital importance, lying, as it certainly does, at the very foundation of the christian faith, and explanatory of the most solemn ordinance of our religion; without carrying my remarks to such an extent as might exhaust your patience, I will

present you with some further illustrations of this interesting subject.

"As the doctrine of the *atonement and* "*sacrifice* of *Jesus Christ,*" says an elegant author,* "is one of the fundamental articles of "our holy faith; God in the course of his wise "providence had prepared the world for its "belief and reception."

"A sense of guilt lying upon the mind, and "the fear of punishment from that Judge who "will render to every man according to his "works, drove the sinner to some expedient "for atoning the wrath of an offended Deity."

"It is very extraordinary that among all "the people of the world, the method of ma-"king atonement for sin, was invariably the "same. All the nations of antiquity that are "to be found in the records of history—all the "modern nations whom recent discoveries have "brought within the sphere of our knowledge, "however they may have differed in customs "and manners, have universally and invaria-"bly agreed in making atonement for sin, by "offering sacrifices to the Deity. This fact is "the more extraordinary as such a method of "propitiation is not founded on nature—is not "the dictate of reason, nor the result of any "feelings of the human frame. If we consult "with reason, she will tell us that the Deity "can never take pleasure in the tortures, or "in the blood of innocent animals; reason will "tell us that it is impossible that the blood of "goats or of bulls, or the ashes of a heifer,

* Logan, Vol. II. p. 399.

"can avail to satisfy divine justice, or purify "the soul from sin. A practice therefore so "universal, not founded in nature, nor deduci- "ble from reason, can be accounted for, no "otherwise than by considering it as the re- "mains of those ancient traditions delivered to "the descendants of Noah, and by them "handed down to succeeding ages. Here we "cannot but see the wisdom and watchful care "of providence, that whilst many other tradi- "tions perished in the course of time, and are "in the gulph of oblivion, this was kept up "entire, all over the world, in order to pre- "pare the nations for the reception of christi- "anity; which establishes the capital doctrine "of *an atonement for sin, upon a sacrifice.*"

"Not only were sacrifices in general use "among the heathen, but also among the most "celebrated nations of antiquity; illustrious "personages had arisen, who inspired with "generous patriotism had in cases of danger "and calamity devoted *themselves* to certain "death to save their country. These self-de- "voted heroes, these martyrs to the good of "mankind, were held in admiration by their "countrymen, first in the song of praise, and "highest in the temple of fame.

"After the publication of christianity it "was no difficult task to transfer the praise "and veneration which was paid to these *tem-* "*poral* deliverers, to that DIVINE LOVER of "mankind, and Redeemer of our race; who "offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins, "and died for the happiness of the world.

" Hence the atonement requisite for the sins " of the world was finished."

" More than seven hundred years before our *Lord's* appearance on earth, the evangelical prophet Isaiah had foretold his sufferings and death, as well as the purposes for which they were intended,—that " his soul [or life] was " to be made an offering for sin,"—that he was " to bear the sin of many,"—that he was to be " wounded for our transgressions and " bruised for ouriniquities,"—and that " with " his stripes we were to be healed."

That he was to be " brought as a lamb to " the slaughter,"—that he was to be " cut off, " out of the land of the living," and to be " stricken for our transgressions." So that if we would form just ideas respecting the great sacrifice thus offered by the Son of God, we should endeavour fully to understand the nature and design of the sacrifices which the ancient Jews offered to God for the sins they might commit."

" The sacrifices of this description were styled sacrifices either of *expiation*, or of *propitiation*—at once to cancel *past* offences, and to render the Deity propitious to the offender."

" Such seems to have been the aim of the different ceremonies prescribed to the Jews. They brought the victim to the altar. He who presented the offering, put his hand on its head, thus to signify, that it took his place, that, (so to speak) it bore his sins which he then confessed. The victim was then slain, and its blood sprinkled on the altar. This was in-

tended as a most impressive emblem, and an authentic confirmation of the acknowledgment of the person making the offering, (or of the priest in his name) that he deserved the severest punishment, that of death itself, which an innocent victim suffered in his place. These sacrifices were then solemn acts of humiliation by which the offenders expected to deprecate the indignation of God, and once more obtain his favour; intimating at the same time that they were pledged to evince the sincerity of their repentance by a life of piety and virtue. Hence it is clear that the intention of these services was, to impress on the mind of the worshipper those truths which form the basis of all true religion, namely, that God in his nature is just and holy—that sin exposes the offender to his just displeasure,—and that the only means of averting this, is by sincere repentance,—by a humble confession of our offences, and ardently imploring the Divine forgiveness and compassion."

After this explanation we cannot be much at a loss in regard to the meaning of the sacred authors when they speak of the death of *Jesus Christ* for our sins. It is in substance—that God, who was willing to receive into favour our offending race, in his infinite wisdom, in order to show them that he would receive only those who should return to him with all their heart; sent his own Son into this rebellious province of his empire, to suffer, and to die on the cross, for the *expiation* of their sins, and as the medium of *reconciliation* between

offending man, and his offended Creator; and that our Divine Master having graciously agreed to suffer and to die in our behalf, has thus become *an all sufficient sacrifice* for the salvation of the human race.

In this view, have the writers of the New Testament invariably presented this subject; and if this be not decidedly their meaning, the clear, unequivocal import of these sacred records, *then human language has no signification, and cannot be relied on, as the expression of thought—or the means of conveying knowledge to the human intellect.*

When the holy Baptist—the predicted "*forerunner*" of the long expected *Messiah*, first beheld *him* "whose shoes latchet" he thought himself "unworthy to unloose," he exclaimed, "Behold the *Lamb* of God, who taketh away "the sins of the world." (John i. 29.)

And St. Paul declares that "we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in *Christ Jesus*, whom God hath "set forth as a propitiation, through faith in "his blood, to declare his righteousness for "the remission of sins that are past, through "the forbearance of God; that he might be "just, and the justifier of him who believeth "in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 23—26.)

"For the law of the spirit of life in Christ "Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin "and death; for what the law could not do, "in that it was weak through the flesh; God "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful

"flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the "flesh." (Rom. viii. 2, 3.)

"In whom (Jesus Christ) we have *redemp-* "*tion through his blood,* the forgiveness of "sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.)

"Who his own self," says the apostle Peter, "bare our sins, in his own body on the "tree; that we being dead to sins, should live "unto him by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Pet. ii. 24.)

In like manner the apostle John declares, "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all "sin." (1 John i. 7.) "And he is the victim "that hath expiated our sins, and not ours only, "but the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.)

These passages from the New Testament, shew us, not only why the death of Christ is exhibited as a *sacrifice*, but why he is represented as our atoning *Priest;* who has once for all, offered *himself* as a *whole burnt-offering*, for the sins of mankind.

"I am the good Shepherd," says our Divine Teacher. "The good shepherd giveth his "life for the sheep; therefore doth my Father "love me; because I lay down my life, that I "might take it again—No man taketh it from "me, but I lay it down of myself; I have "power to lay it down, and I have power to "take it again.—This commandment I have "received of my Father." (John x. 11—17.) "The Son of man," he says on another occasion, "came not to be ministered unto, but to

"minister, and to give his life a ransom for "many." (Matt. xx. 28.)

So the apostle Paul exhorts his Ephesian converts, "Walk in love, as Christ also loved "us, and hath given himself for us, an offering "and a sacrifice to God; for a sweet smelling "savour." (Eph. v. 2.)

I remain as ever,

Very truly Yours.

LETTER XXI.

My Dear Friend—

I trust from what has now been stated you will consider yourself as sufficiently informed, in regard to the *nature* and *design* of the Lord's Supper.—Let us next bestow a few thoughts on the *necessity* of this sacrament, and on the peculiar *suitableness* of the materials, used in its celebration.

Its *necessity* arises from the constitution of our nature.—We are a compound of matter and of spirit—The union between these is so close, that the one cannot be affected without a sensible influence on the other.—If the bodily system in general be enfeebled by disease, or the nerves deranged by fever, or any other cause, the mind partakes of the effects, and

loses the full exercise of its powers. So if the *mind* be agitated by any violent passion, or the faculties applied too long, and too intensely, to any subject; the health of the body is impaired, or prostrated.

It is difficult to estimate aright the power of sympathy.—Our feelings are affected most powerfully, by the occurrence of circumstances which remind us of past events, in which we have taken a deep interest.

After losing a very dear friend, the sight of other friends, with whom that friend has been accustomed to associate,—of the books read, or of letters written, by the deceased—naturally brings back the image of the friend whose loss we mourn, strongly to our recollection; and awakens all the grief we have felt at the first moments of separation.

> "There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
> And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd,
> Some chord in unison with what we hear
> Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies—
> Wherever I have heard
> A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
> And with it, all its pleasures and its pains."*

The same is the law of our nature in regard to *sights*.

The recurrence of a scene *similar* to one we have before witnessed, will restore the remembrance of the first, with all its minutest circumstances.

Such is the case also where some apposite and striking *memento* has been left, that is cal-

* Cowper's Task, book VI.

culated to awaken in the memory, or heart, ideas or feelings, which it was thought useful to cherish.

*"We are so formed by the author of our "existence, that the memorial of a friend who "is no more, and the token of love that is "past, has a wonderful power over our "affections.—The slightest circumstance that "recalls a departed friend, awakens the sensi- "bility of the soul—The smallest relic acquires "a value.—A robe, a book, a ring, or a por- "trait, calls up a history on which the heart "delights to dwell."

Considerations like these shew us the importance of enlisting the senses, the sympathies and the affections of the heart, all on the side of piety. The great mass of mankind are governed more by their feelings, than their judgment.—And our allwise Creator "knowing our frame," and remembering that we are not *pure intelligences*, but composed of *animal*, as well as of *spiritual* materials, most mercifully has accommodated his *instructions*, and his *institutions*, to our *actual* condition. Without doubt he might have communicated by *intuition*, or by *inspiration* whatever knowledge he might have thought needful for our present state. But facts show us that such was not his will—He has left us to the direction of our own minds, enlightened by his word and his Spirit, and subject to all the influence which our senses, or our affections, may have on our deportment.

* Logan, vol. II. page 354.

The symbols used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, are of that description which is calculated to affect our senses, and through them, our hearts, and our lives. Hence we infer the *necessity* of using *material* emblems in the celebration of this ordinance.

These *symbols* in many respects, are peculiarly *suitable*, and *significant*.

They are *simple;* and they are *easy of acquisition* in almost every part of the globe.

They are *not so costly*, as to be beyond the reach of the poorest of the flock of Christ.—They are highly expressive, and admirably calculated to serve as the *memorials* of what they were designed to recall to the remembrance of believers.

Although there appears to be no *natural* resemblance between broken bread, and a lacerated human body, or between wine, and human blood,—yet by associating the circumstances under which the Lord's Supper was instituted, with the symbols then used, and have ever since been used, in its celebration; the heart will necessarily be much affected through the senses, the memory, and imagination.

The simple elements used in this ordinance, are impressive from the relation they exhibit between our bodily and spiritual wants. As bread and wine nourish and strengthen the animal system, (when used in moderation)—as they sustain life, and give energy to all the powers and faculties of our nature; so the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus,—when viewed aright, nourishes our souls with heavenly food.

It becomes "meat indeed, and drink indeed," to our *spiritual* nature—It strengthens our faith,—it animates our hope, "for we are saved "by hope." (Rom. viii. 24.)—It confers present peace of conscience,—joy in the Holy Ghost,—fills the heart with the most elevating sensations, and prepares it for the pure and permanent enjoyments of heaven.

These simple emblems are not intended to *refresh the body*, but to *nourish the soul*. The *feast* to which we are invited is altogether of a *spiritual* nature—It is a *feast on a sacrifice*. It is a feast of love. By the influence of memory and imagination, the soul is carried back to the first era of christianity.—Like a monument of marble or of brass, this ordinance exhibits to the *senses* of the believer, the deeply tragical and interesting circumstance of its first institution.—Looking back through the telescope of faith, which brings these distant objects near to our contemplation; we see our Divine Master surrounded with his little group, of affectionate, but timid disciples,—apprizing them of his approaching sufferings, but mingling consolations with his afflicting predictions—And when he gave them the broken bread, and handed them the sacramental cup, solemnly, but kindly charging them, "Do this in remembrance of me."—We can almost imagine we hear him thus addressing his disciples, "Behold me who in a few hours "will be suspended on a cross, dying a death of "shame and of agony; the peculiar punishment "of wicked slaves, or of abandoned malefactors.

" Behold me the jest of the insulting priest;—
" in punishment associated with the outcasts
" of society; rejected of men, and forsaken of
" God.—All this I suffer innocently, to expiate
" the sins of the world, and to renew the alli-
" ance between my Father and his offending
" creatures.—Of this great sacrifice, let these
" simple emblems be constant memorials, until
" I come again in all the glory of my Father,
" and with the holy angels to judge the uni-
" verse."

Let then all the true disciples of this Divine Teacher, to the end of time, " do this in re-
" membrance of him;" for " so oft as they eat
" *this* bread, and drink *this* cup they do shew
" forth their Lord's death till he come."

We can form some faint idea of the reasonableness of complying with this injunction, by imagining how deeply we should feel indebted to a fellow mortal who at *the hazard only*, of *his own*, should have saved the *life* of a beloved friend or relative, of ours.—What deep and lasting gratitude should we feel for such an exertion? What suitable returns could we ever make to such a benefactor?

Yet in the case of our Redeemer, it is not a fellow mortal—It is the Sovereign of men and of angels,—*for* whom and *by* whom, all things were made; who leaving the glories of heaven, condescended to assume a human form,—to bear our sins in his own body on the tree,—to lead a life of poverty, neglect and suffering, and to die the death of a malefactor in order to atone for human guilt; and to give all who

believe on him, an assured title to everlasting happiness.

It is this august personage who says,—

"Do this in remembrance of me."

Christians, in celebrating this ordinance, should remember not only what our blessed Lord has already done for them, but what he has also *promised* to do.

"Whosoever shall eat my flesh, and drink "my blood," says the Divine Teacher, "I "will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 54.) While the bread and the wine, are presented to our view in this sacrament, we should recollect the promise of our Lord, just recited. *His* resurrection is a sure pledge of *our own*.

"Those who sleep in Jesus, God will surely "bring with him," when he comes to judge the world.—How precious is this hope to the true believer! when he looks around, and sees one friend after another dropping into the grave; when he calls to mind how many fellow communicants, with whom he has surrounded the table of his Master, have gone to their eternal home: and in connection with these mournful recollections, when he realizes the certainty of his own decease, and the total uncertainty of the period of this event—he is consoled with the promise of his Divine Master,—with the certain prospect of soon rising to life, under circumstances infinitely more delightful than those in which he is now placed. He may indeed say with the patriarch Jacob, "I die,"—but HE knows that he does not die for ever; and with Job he can exclaim, "I

"know that my Redeemer liveth, and I shall "stand on the earth at the latter day." (Job xix. 25.)

Let corruption then be my portion—let this frail tent sink into ruins.—It will not continue so long. After a short repose in the grave, it will rise again, arrayed in imperishable beauty, and assimulated to that of the Son of God.—"This corruptible, shall put on incor- "ruption; and this mortal, shall put on im- "mortality,"—Death will be disarmed of his sting, and be "swallowed up in victory."

How soothing are thoughts like these to the humble christian, who feels the extreme precariousness of human life, and realizes his certain, and perhaps speedy departure, from the present life.

His heart is a stranger to anxiety, he has made his peace with God; and through that great sacrifice, offered once for all by the Lord Jesus, he hopes for happiness without measure, and without end.

Although our Divine Master has submitted to death for our sakes, yet "*now* is *Christ* "risen from the dead, and has become the first "fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. xv. 20.) He rose as the representative of his people,—as the leader of an innumerable multitude who shall follow him into the heavens. Hence we are said to "be begotten again by the resur- "rection of Christ from the dead,"—to be made alive with Christ, to be risen with him, and sit with him in heavenly places.

"Our salvation is every where ascribed in Scripture to the death and sufferings of our Saviour; but his *resurrection* was proof that the sacrifice which he offered was accepted by God, and that the price he paid was available for our recovery. By his suffering unto death, we were freed from condemnation, but our freedom was not made manifest, till he arose from the grave. His resurrection then is the basis of the whole christian institution, and the ground of our faith, and hope in him."

Although "he had declared that he was of-
"fered up as a sacrifice, and to give his life a
"ransom for many; if he had never appeared
"again, how should we have known that the
"sacrifice was accepted, or that the ransom
"was paid?"

"But when he burst the bands of death and
"rose victorious from the tomb, then it was ma-
"nifest he had finished the work, which the Fa-
"ther gave him to do. When he arose, and
"brought back with him the pardon which he
"had sealed with his blood;—when instead of
"executing wrath upon his enemies, he sent
"again the offer of peace and reconciliation;
"and took upon himself to be their chief inter-
"cessor, as he already had been their sacrifice:
"what room was there to doubt the efficacy of
"his death, the efficacy of which had been so
"undeniably confirmed by his resurrection."

"Here then we may hail the completion of
"that plan, by which the world was to be re-
"deemed. Our great High-Priest has now of-
"fered up the sacrifice that was requisite for

"the salvation of the world.—The wrath of "God is atoned, the guilt of sin is taken away, "peace is ratified, and sealed between God "and man; and there is joy in heaven over "the redeemed upon earth."

"That this sacrifice was acceptable and me- "ritorious in the sight of God, he hath testi- "fied unto all men by raising his Son from the "dead; by exalting him to his own right hand, "and committing to him the sceptre of Provi- "dence, for the government of the universe."*

Thrice happy then are those who when they surround the table of their Lord, and receive there the emblems of his *death*, remember his *resurrection* also, and in that, the certain assurance of *their own*.—"Happy those who live "here with an eye raised to immortality, and "whose principal business in this world is to "lay up a sure treasure for that which is to "come. Such souls are superior to the events "of this uncertain state, their prize is beyond "time, and their views are habitually di- "rected to it."

"That day which shall bring despair to "those who have forgotten the end of their "being, and the grandeur of their destination, "shall be to them a day of humble, but com- "plete triumph. Then shall they see Jesus, "the faithful, and the true witness, and shall "enjoy the glory he has promised to his fol- "lowers."

"Then transformed into the likeness of their "Divine Redeemer, in soul and in body,

* Logan.

"they shall shine throughout eternity, like "the brightness of the firmament, and like the "stars for ever and ever."*

I am yours very truly.

LETTER XXII.

My Dear Friend—

Having contemplated the nature and design of the Lord's Supper, let us next turn our attention to the *benefits* which ought to follow, and which usually *do* accompany its celebration.

That it is one of the most effectual means of grace—that it is the seal of adoption into the family of Christ—that it unites us to him by the strongest ties, and promotes sanctity of heart and life; is not a matter of doubt or of controversy;—But on the other hand that in many instances it is observed rather under erroneous and superstitious views, than conformably to its true design, cannot be questioned.

It has been maintained by some learned men, that "the *present* remission of sins is "annexed to this Sacrament." "This," Mr. Knox contends, "is the doctrine of the Eng

* Mc Claine.

"lish church and of every church which has "received the apostles' and the Nicene "creed—that it was the doctrine of the pri- "mitive churches—even of the churches over "which St. Paul presided—that it is the "express language of Scripture—that St. "Paul and his converts actually did obtain "*present* pardon—that it is implied in the no- "tion of justification—that it is supposed in "the daily use of the Lord's prayer—that it "is expressly the annexed benefit of *one* Sa- "crament *thus* to wash for the *present* remis- "sion of sins, and therefore if in the other we "drink the "blood shed for the remission of "sins," we do in that also receive the same "benefit,"* And hence says Mr. Knox,† "I "have no reluctance in declaring that when "a poor dying mortal humbly desires to re- "ceive the holy Sacrament, the minister may "administer it without scruple or *strictness* of "examination, (which time and circumstances "hardly will permit)—and if he is in an error, "he will be pardoned by the God of mercy."

This is a doctrine which the members of Reformed Protestant Churches, will but in few instances admit at the present day. That this rite is a *memorial* of the death of Jesus Christ, and if received by *faith*, will have a tendency to exalt the christian character, and to promote the happiness of the recipient, here and

* He refers to three Sermons, preached by Bishop Cleaveland, at Oxford, which he says proves these points satisfactorily.

† See Knox on the Lord's Supper, page 117.

hereafter, no well-informed believer will deny. But in this case it is not *the ordinance,* but the antecedent graces, *faith repentance* and *love,* to which *remission of sins* is annexed.

As this Sacrament is an institution of divine appointment, there can be no question of its efficacy, as a *mean of grace.* It is a memorial addressed to our senses—intended powerfully to recal to our minds a crucified Saviour, with all his countless benefits. When the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness murmured and rebelled against the authority of their Almighty Sovereign, he sent fiery* serpents among them to punish their rebellion. For such as were humbled and confessed their guilt and folly, he provided a mean of relief, intended at once for the restoration of health, and for the trial of their faith. He directed a *brazen serpent* to be made, and set up to view. Every person after having been bitten by one of those venomous reptiles, however near to death, who should *look* to the brazen emblem set up by MOSES, was instantly restored to health.

This type of a crucified Saviour, is expressly referred to, by our LORD, and applied to himself, in his conversation with Nicodemus. "And as *Moses,*" says he "lifted up the "serpent in the wilderness, even so must the "Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever

* Probably so termed from their appearance, or from the inflamation, and sensation of burning, which may have attended their bite.

"believeth in him, should not perish, but have "everlasting life." (John iii. 14, 15.)

Here it was not the mere circumstance of *looking* on this emblem—but the principle within;—it was that *faith*, that trusted in the appointed mean of safety. So the Lord's Supper though not of itself the *immediate* instrument of a sinner's salvation, is nevertheless a *memorial* and *pledge* of that covenant, between the Creator and the creature, which secures to the latter, all the blessings promised in the gospel. Its immediate tendency, when rightly received, is to increase and strengthen the great principles of faith, repentance, and charity.

1. It is the appointed mean for increasing our *faith*. It holds up to our view, the "Lamb "of God, slain from the foundation of the "world." It exhibits to our senses "the evi-"dence of things not seen," and strengthens in our bosoms that Divine principle which is "the substance of things hoped for."

We are naturally incredulous of whatever has not come within the scope of our own observation or experience—Our faith often requires the assistance of our senses. Aided by these, we obtain a clear and more impressive view of spiritual objects, than when seen abstractedly from sense. When therefore the soul, in this ordinance sees through the simple emblems of bread and wine, the broken body and shed blood of a Saviour, it beholds in a more lively manner the unbounded love and compassion of God. "Hungering and thirst-

"ing after righteousness," it there feeds on the "bread of life," it drinks the *life giving* blood of the Redeemer, and is strengthened and nourished by the blessed repast.

These simple elements become the means of imparting spiritual health and vigour. The mind, the affections, and the conscience, all feel their influence.

Then anxieties are relieved, fears are dissipated, and the mind is composed. The world is overcome with all its attractions, its honours, its wealth, and its pleasures.—These illusive objects lose their influence on the heart.—They are no longer regarded as the *portion* of the soul. The worthy communicant having his eye intently fixed on "a crown of righteous-"ness" in the heavens, "fights the good fight "of faith," with unshaken firmness.—He holds up the shield of faith to protect him from the envenomed darts of sin, and going on from strength to strength, he looks forward to the close of his warfare, in the assured hope of victory through him who "loved us, and gave "himself for us."

2. This ordinance has a tendency to strengthen our *repentance*. Faith and repentance, are said to be "twin graces, and can "never be separated. True faith leads to re-"pentance, and true repentance includes "faith."

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has a powerful influence, on both of these christian graces. The devout communicant, when he beholds "evidently set before him," the em-

blems of the dying love of his Redeemer, not only realizes, and firmly believes in the great sacrifice once offered up for human guilt; but he is led to enquire the cause. "Was it to ex-"piate *my* sins, as well as the sins of the world," he exclaims, "that the Son of God came down "from heaven, and died on a cross?"—Was a price of such infinite value, paid for the redemption of *my* soul?—Oh how should I then abhor every description of sin against God,—how sincerely ought I to repent of past transgressions, and how cautiously should I abstain in future from every "appearance of evil," that would lead me again to offend the best of benefactors, and to "crucify afresh the Son "of God."

3. Another benefit resulting from this ordinance, is the tendency it has to promote mutual affection among professing christians.

It is a feast of love,—a communion of kindness and affection; and is calculated to unite christians by the strong ties of undissembled friendship.

"See how these christians love each other," was the remark of Heathens, in the first ages of christianity. "By this," says our Divine Master, "shall all men know that ye are my "disciples, if ye have *love* one to another." (John xvi. 34, 35.) "This is my *command-*"*ment*, that ye love one another as I have "loved you." (John xv. 12—17.)

"Let all bitterness," says an inspired apostle, "and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and "evil speaking, be put away from you; with

"all malice, and be ye kind to one another, "and tender hearted,—forgiving one another, "even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven "you." (Eph. iv. 31, 32.)—And in another Epistle he enjoins on his converts, "Let love "be without dissimulation—Be kindly affec- "tioned to one another, with *brotherly love*, in "honour preferring one another." (Rom. xii. 9, 10.)

This mutual affection so strictly enjoined by our Divine Master, and his apostles, is not an impracticable duty. It is enforced, not merely by commandments or exhortation, but by example. Our Lord might well in this respect, as in all others, charge us "to follow "him," for he loved us while we were yet enemies. His incarnation, his instructions, his sufferings, his miracles, and his death,—all are evidence of a transcendant, an unparalleled love; as far beyond all precedent, as it is beyond the reach of complete imitation.

So among the first converts to christianity,—what love and harmony, what confidence and union prevailed! Although "not many wise "men after the flesh,—not many mighty, not "many noble," were at first called, (1 Cor. i. 26.) yet so rich were those primitive christians in faith, so "kindly affectioned" that they sympathized with each other in all their sufferings.—All distinctions arising from rank, from talents, and from wealth, disappeared among them. Although "being many," they considered themselves as "one body in Christ Je-

"sus, and every one, members one of another." (Rom. xii. 5.)

"All that believed were together, and had "all things in common; and sold their posses- "sions and goods, and parted them to all men "as every man had need,—and they continu- "ing with one accord in the temple, and in "breaking bread, from house to house;" (that is, celebrating this ordinance in their religious assemblies, then only held in private houses,) "they did eat their meat (food) with gladness, "and singleness of heart, praising God, and "having favour with all the people." (Acts ii. 44, 45, 46, 47.)

What a picture of mutual kindness, of union, of sympathy, of compassion and social enjoyment, does this short account of the first Jewish converts, give to the reader. Such also were the blessed effects of christianity among those early heathen disciples, to whom the gospel was first preached.

Pliny* the Roman governor of Bithynia, in his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan respecting the Christians in his province, says, "they were accustomed on a set, solemn day, "(probably the Lord's day) to meet together, "and obliged themselves by a sacrament (an "oath) not to commit any wickedness, but to "love each other as brethren, and to live to- "gether as friends."

And how admirably calculated is the Lord's Supper to produce these effects among professing christians! Sitting around the same table,—

* See Plin. Epist. Lib. X. Epist. 97.

joining in the same solemn covenant,—enlisting under the same great Captain of their salvation,—having one faith,—seeking the same inheritance above: their aims, their hopes, their exercises being the same;—how can they regard each other with any sentiment but that of affection?—And much to be pitied is that communicant, who can sit down at this feast, with sentiments of hatred, of malice, or revenge toward a fellow believer. This would indeed be to partake very unworthily of this sacred ordinance.

I remain as ever,
Your's truly.

LETTER XXIII.

My Dear Friend—

A fourth benefit resulting from the participation of this sacrament, is its tendency to give a decided, and a favourable cast to the character of the communicant. So long as the mind is halting between two opinions; so long as the affections are divided between two objects; so long as God and Mammon alternately govern the heart; so long the character will be wavering and unsteady. But when once the resolution is taken in favour of religion, and

an *open* profession of it is made; then the very fear of bringing a blot on the christian character,—the very regard to *consistency of profession and deportment*, has a powerful influence on every well regulated mind.—The believer will naturally reflect, that after enlisting under the banner of the cross;—after entering into a solemn covenant with his Saviour;—after having publicly taken an *oath of allegiance* to his Sovereign; then to prove unfaithful to his cause, to disobey his commands, and to be cold or unfriendly to his fellow soldiers, in this sacred warfare; would exhibit at once impiety to God, and subject him to disgrace and contempt, in the eyes of every intelligent spectator.

5. Another very important benefit resulting from the worthy participation of this ordinance, is a sense of pardoned sin,—an exemption from the pangs of remorse.

The Deity has implanted in man a principle, which we term conscience, and which sits in the bosom of the largest portion of mankind, as a judge over the thoughts of the heart, and the actions of the life. It is that sense, which not only, (with the assistance of the understanding) decides on what is right or wrong, but in the one case, it approves and promotes happiness, and in the other, *disapproves*, and makes the offender wretched. It is that sense, by which we apprehend the nature and the pleasures of holiness, by which we perceive and abhor moral turpitude, or evil.—It is the

helm that guides our frail bark through the stormy ocean of life.

It is either an angel of light, guiding us and cheering us, in our passage to the shores of immortality; or it is an avenging demon, armed with a whip of scorpions, to punish our aberrations from duty, and to show us the inseparable connection that subsists between crime, and misery.—Frail and fallen as we are, we can no more commit moral evil without suffering, than we can receive a wound, or have a limb dislocated, without pain. Sin is as deadly a poison to the soul, as the sting of the most venomous insect, or the bite of a serpent, is to the human body.—No man can commit a crime, without inflicting a wound on his conscience, that will leave a durable pain. The impression on the moral faculty, will remain like a scar on the body, often, till the close of life.—It is true that conscience may sometimes be lulled to sleep by the opiates of infidel principles, or by the ingenuity of perverted reasoning; but it will not sleep for ever. It will awake sometimes when least expected, in the hour of adversity or affliction; and it will "bite like a serpent, and sting like an "adder."—It will pursue the criminal like a spectre—It will haunt his thoughts by day, and his dreams by night—It will often destroy his relish for every pleasure, and make life itself an intolerable burden.—Look at the first murderer Cain. Sensible of his crime, he imagined that "every one who found him, would "slay him." Look at Belshazzar amongst his

wives, his princes, and his guards.—While quaffing wine, in honour of his gods, in the consecrated vessels pillaged from the temple of the living God; he sees a hand, unconnected with any visible body, writing his sentence on the wall—His spirit sinks within him,—his countenance is changed,—his knees tremble,—conscience upbraids him; and while the prophet denounces his doom, he believes, and trembles, and despairs.

It is true indeed that amidst health and prosperity, while surrounded with honours, or when immersed in business, the voice of conscience may for a while be stifled; but on the bed of sickness or of death, it will often exert a tremendous energy.—"The spirit of man "may sustain his infirmities (of body) but a "wounded spirit," (a heart lacerated by remorse) "who can bear?"—"There is no escaping from a guilty mind. You can escape some evils by mingling in society,—you can avoid others by retiring into solitude; but this enemy,—this tormentor within, is never to be avoided. If you retire into solitude, it will meet you there. If you mingle in society, it will go with you there.—It will mar the entertainment, and dash the untasted cup, from your trembling hand."

"The Almighty appointed it his vicegerent in the world—He invested it with his own authority, and said, "Be thou a God over man" —Hence it has power over the course of time. It can recal the past, it can anticipate the future. It reaches beyond the limits of the globe.

It visits the chambers of the grave. It re-animates the bodies of the dead, exerts a dominion over the invisible regions, and summons the inhabitants of the eternal world, to haunt the slumbers, and shake the hearts of the wicked."*

Of what infinite importance is it then, that every one should be at peace with conscience. How dreadful, to have this impartial judge, converted into an avenging foe,—to have it like a devouring vulture, without intermission preying on our vitals, and destroying the very elements of life and joy.

But how is the guilty offender to escape the pangs of an accusing conscience? The gospel unfolds the plan—It directs the guilty soul to "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better "things than the blood of Abel."—It points to the cross,—to the *great sacrifice* made once for all, to expiate the guilt of the world.—The penitent believer is assured of pardon, and that his peace is ratified with his offended Sovereign. His mind lately agonized with remorse, now obtains a calm and uninterrupted repose—Assured that "there is joy in heaven over one "sinner that repenteth," he abandons his sins and his fears together, and hears his Divine Master addressing him in words like these, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven "thee."

This inestimable boon,—this sense of pardoned sin, this release from the corrosion of remorse, is one of the delightful benefits re-

* Logan.

sulting from a worthy participation of the Lord's Supper.

6. The last benefit I shall mention, to be derived from this Sacrament, when properly received, is the consolation it affords to believers, at the close of life.

Great caution however should be used here to avoid relying on it as any thing more than an *appointed mean*,—as an institution calculated to impress the mind with suitable dispositions, and to call forth into lively exercise those graces which are inseparably connected with future happiness. There is nothing in the Scriptures that can justify the belief, that independently of this influence, there is any peculiar efficacy in the ordinance itself; or of merit in the persons, by whom it is administered; which should induce the "*present* re-"mission of sin." At the same time, it is admitted to be a very solemn, and most consolatory ordinance, especially in the prospect of our approaching dissolution.

When this Sacrament was first instituted by our blessed Lord, it was with immediate reference to *his own* death—"He knew," says the beloved disciple "that his hour was come, "and that he should depart out of the world "unto the Father." (John xiii. 1.)—"With "desire," said our Lord himself, "have I de-"sired to eat *this passover with you* before "I suffer." (Luke xxii. 15.)

So communicants, while they celebrate the death of their Divine leader, are powerfully reminded of their own decease. Looking back

to the ages that have elapsed since the appearance of their Lord in the flesh, they recal the many generations of believers that have passed away. Even within the short compass of their own lives, they perhaps recollect many beloved friends with whom they once were accustomed to surround the table of their Divine Master. Their bodies are now sleeping in the dust; but their spirits it is hoped, at this moment, are feasting with angels, and with the Redeemer himself, around a heavenly table. Communicants are thus reminded of their own dissolution,—they are detached from the world,—they feel its vanity.—They rise superior to its amusements, its cares, its temptations, and its trials. A holy calm,—a secret thrill of joy,—a delightful anticipation of future bliss, occupy the bosoms of devout communicants, while thoughts like these arise in their mind.—"What a privilege is this blessed Sacrament! Here we commemorate the *death* of our divine Redeemer.—By this, he made atonement for our sins—By this he has taken away "the sting of death" from all his followers.—We now celebrate this feast of love, perhaps for the last time—Before the return of another season, some of us may be numbered with the dead. If so, ought we not to regard this sacred ordinance as our Saviour's pledge, that on quitting this communion on earth, we shall hold a nearer communion with him above? Is not this an *earnest* of the joy he has in reserve for his followers, in heaven?—And can we,—ought we, with these views, to dread the approach

of our last hour?—Will not that hour which breaks the tie that binds the soul to earth, release it so, that it may rise, and reach the beatific vision of the adorable Redeemer?"

By reflections like these, the devout and worthy communicant finds how admirably calculated the celebration of the Lord's Supper is, to prepare the soul for quitting its tenement of clay with dignity and composure;—nay, for triumphing over death and the grave. In the anticipated joys of heaven, he may exclaim with the apostle Paul, "Oh death where is "thy sting? Oh grave where is thy victory! "The sting of death is sin, and the strength "of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who "giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus "Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.)

I am with much regard
Yours, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

My Dear Friend—

I rejoice to hear that after much serious reflection, and after humbly soliciting divine aid in a matter of so much importance, you have concluded finally to make an *open* profession of your faith in Christ, by partak-

ing of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In this resolution may you be supported; and when the approaching solemnity is past, may you enjoy the fruits of this act of obedience, not merely in the present life, but throughout the ages of an immortal existence.

You wish to know however "if there are "not some peculiar duties to which your at- "tention should be directed prior to the cele- "bration of this Sacrament?" Such without doubt there are. The apostle Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, recommends to those who are desirous of partaking *worthily* of this ordinance, that they should "*examine* "themselves, and *so* eat of that bread and "drink of *that cup*." Hence the duty of *self-examination* preparatory to an admission to the Lord's Supper.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines in their Shorter Catechism, thus state the qualifications respecting which, all persons who offer themselves as candidates for the holy communion, should examine themselves closely and impartially.

"It is required of them that would worthily "partake of the Lord's Supper, that they ex- "amine themselves of their knowledge to dis- "cern the Lord's body—of their faith to feed "upon him—of their repentance, faith, and "new obedience; lest coming unworthily they "eat and drink judgment to themselves."

In the Catechism of the Reformed Dutch Church, the preparatory questions on which communicants should satisfy themselves are

these.—1. "Whether they abhor themselves for "their sins, and humble themselves before "God on account of them. 2. Whether they "believe and trust that all their sins will be "forgiven for Christ's sake. 3. Whether they "have a sincere resolution henceforward to "walk in all good works."

In the Catechism of the Protestant Episcopal Church "What is required of those who "come to the Lord's Supper," is thus stated. "That they examine themselves whether they "repent them truly of their former sins—"stedfastly purposing to lead a new life—"have a lively faith in God's mercy through "Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his "death, and be in charity with all men."

"I pretend not," says a learned French divine,* "to repeat all the apostle has said "on this subject, (the Lord's Supper) but "shall content myself with remarking that "these words, "*let a man examine himself*" "signifies not merely the exercise of *memory*, "in recalling the past and present state of his "heart and life; but it directs (as the original "imports,) such a *trial* of the character as "that which is made of metals, by which the "*dross* is separated from the *ore*. The meaning of the apostle must then be, that every "one should cultivate those dispositions of "mind and heart which would fit him for the "solemn transaction in which he is about to "engage. This is without doubt the duty of "every communicant, who wishes to draw

* Mallet.

"closer those ties that unite him to his God "and Saviour."

One of the most interesting moralists* of the present day, in her admirable treatise on Practical Piety, has an essay on *self-examination;* every sentence of which conveys instruction; but as it would be tedious to copy the whole I shall select a few of the most striking passages for your perusal and edification.

"We should examine" she says, "not only "our conduct, but our opinions—not only our "faults, but our prejudices,—not only our "propensities, but our judgments. Our actions "will be obvious enough, it is our *intentions* "which require the scrutiny. These, we should "follow to their remotest springs—scrutinize "to their deepest recesses, and trace through "their most purplexing windings—and lest "we should in our pursuit wander in uncer-"tainty and blindness, let us make use of that "guiding clue which the Almighty has fur-"nished by his word, and by his Spirit, for con-"ducting us through this labyrinth. "What "I know not,—teach thou me," should be our "constant petition in all our researches."

"Nor must this examination be occasional, "but regular. Let us not run into long ar-"rears, but settle our accounts frequently. "Little articles will run up to a large amount "if they are not cleared off—Our deadness in "devotion—our eagerness for human applause, "—our care to *conceal* our faults rather than "*correct* them; our negligent performance

* Mrs Hannah More.

"of some relative duty,—our inconsideration, "—our driving to the extreme limits of per- "mitted indulgences; let us keep these, and all "our numerous items in small sums. Let us "examine them while the particulars are fresh "in our memory; otherwise however we may "flatter ourselves that lesser evils will be "swallowed up by the greater, we may find "when we come to settle the grand account, "that they will not be less remembered for "not having been recorded."

In order rightly to practise this duty, our author insists that "no principle, short of "christianity, is strong enough to impel us to "a study so disagreeable as that of our faults. "Our corruptions foster this ignorance. To "this, they owe their undisputed possession of "our hearts."

"Of christianity, humility is the prime "grace; and this grace can never take root and "flourish in a heart that lives in ignorance of "itself. If we do not know the greatness and "extent of our sins; if we do not know the "imperfection of our virtues; the fallibility of "our best resolutions; the infirmity of our "purest purposes; we cannot be humble; and "if we are not humble, we cannot be chris- "tians."

*"Self-examination should be directed by "the solid principles of religion. The word of "God is the rule which must decide on the "conformity of our thoughts, our affections, "and our actions with our duty. The study

* Huet.

"of the heart should extend to all those secret "motives which however they may elude the "public eye, can be known only by close and "impartial inspection. Self-examination em- "braces all those determinations of the will, "all those affections of the heart, and all those "motives to action, which give a complexion "to the life and character. We should reflect "often and with immediate application to "ourselves, on the various relations we sus- "tain to God, and to our fellow creatures, "and on the duties which these relations en- "join, as well as on what regards our own "selves."

"One who would obey the precept of St. "Paul on this subject, and who would obtain "an assurance, that he had a right to apply "to himself all those promises, of which the "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a pledge, "should often review his life and bring his "heart to a strict account for all he had done "or said, from the first dawn of reason, and "of moral agency. A christian who feels "deeply the importance of the apostle's in- "junction will often be led to enquire—Why "has God placed me in the world, and in his "church? Is it not that I might consecrate to "him all the powers of my mind, and all the "affections of my heart? And how have I "fulfilled the object of my creation? Do I "cherish that love to my Redeemer which "should ever characterize his followers? Do "I study *his* will rather than my own? Do I "aim at following *his* example, and in all things

"study to obey his commands? Are my motives pure? Do I seek his glory as my chief object? Have I made the circumstances in which I have been placed, the means of moral improvement and of further advancement in holiness? If wealthy, have I contributed as I ought to the relief of the worthy and suffering poor—or have I expended my riches only in sensual indulgence, in luxury and ostentation? If in moderate, or indigent circumstances, have I murmured and repined? Have I been tempted to arraign the dispensations of heaven, and to complain of the lot assigned me? Or on the other hand, have I with humble resignation looked up to my beneficent Creator, even under his severest frowns, and thankful for the commonest bounties of his Providence, cast all my cares on him, assured of his constant protection here, and of finally obtaining admittance to his kingdom above?"

Such are *some* of the subjects on which every person, who has in contemplation, an approach to the table of the Lord, should often, and very closely interrogatehimself.

The duty of self-examination is one that can never be safely neglected—Its advantages are many and great—It leads to vigilance,—to true knowledge of ourselves,—to purity of heart and manners,—to peace of mind,—to the favour of God,—to the purest happiness in the present life, and to the firm persuasion, of inheriting through the grace of the Lord Jesus, endless felicity, in that which is to come.

I remain your's truly.

LETTER XXV.

My Dear Friend—

The gratitude you express for the feeble assistance I have been enabled to afford, is far beyond my desert, and expectation. From the views you have been enabled to take of the nature and design of the Lord's Supper—of the obligations under which *all* real christians lie to partake of this Sacrament, and of the weakness of those objections that so often prevent sincere believers from coming to this ordinance, it is truly gratifying to learn that you have derived light, encouragement, and relief.

I rejoice to hear, that after having endeavoured faithfully to examine yourself, and to ascertain your duty, (heaven permitting) it is your intention on the next Lord's day, to unite with the church, of which you are a member, in commemorating the dying love of your gracious Redeemer. If "there is joy in heaven "over *one* sinner that repenteth," there cannot be less joy above, over one lamb that has long kept aloof from the fold of Christ, being restored, and brought under the more immediate care of the great Shepherd of souls. Go my christian brother,—go to the HOME of this good shepherd. There you will find safety and comfort. Had you been the vilest prodigal that ever left a

kind father's embrace;—had you revelled with swine, and fed on the husks of iniquity; still you might in the exercise of faith, repentance and love, calculate on a cordial welcome to his table on earth, and through his intercession, to his Father's temple on high.

But when you go to this sacred feast you ask, "are there not duties peculiar to *that* occasion? are there not meditations and recollections, *appropriate* to this solemn ordinance?"

I grant there are. But on this subject, different communicants indulge very different views. As you very modestly ask assistance here, I can only suggest *some hints* in regard to the train of thought, which I should think it profitable to pursue.

I would then recommend to you as far as you possibly can, to abstract your mind from all the cares and solicitudes of life—to collect your wandering thoughts, and fixing them intently on the objects represented by the material emblems presented to your senses; endeavour to hold a close communion with the Father of your spirit, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember the love of God—that transcendent love which prompted him to send his well beloved Son into the world, to die for sinners such as yourself; that as if nothing less would awaken *our* love and gratitude to him, he adopts us as children,—he receives us, all worthless, and polluted as we are, into communion with himself,—he pardons our offences,—he sends his Holy Spirit into our bosoms to

sanctify our affections, to communicate peace, and consolation, and joy, as an *earnest* of better joys above.

When surrounded with trials, he supports us; in affliction he sustains us; in darkness and doubt; he enlightens our path. He illumines before us even the valley of the shadow of death, and directs our hopes to that imperishable bliss in the heavens, which is beyond the reach of accident or change.

While at the table of your Divine Master, you will also recollect his infinite grace and condescension;—"that though he was rich, "yet for our sakes he became poor; that we "through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) That he "so loved us, as to give him-"self for us as an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to "God, for a sweet smelling savour." (Eph. v. 2.)

Looking back to the birth of time,—to the fall of our first parents, and the promise of the great DELIVERER; your mind can retrace the various types and figures, under which he was presented to the faith, and hope of ancient believers, prior to the Mosaic dispensation. Following the course of time, you will call to remembrance the brazen serpent in the wilderness; the sacrifices of the law; the manna from heaven; the living water from the rock; the predictions of the prophets, becoming clearer and more distinct, until after an interval of more than five hundred years, the Baptist,—the morning-star of the gospel-dispensation, appeared to awaken the attention of the world to the rising of the Sun of righteousness.

Then there was joy among the angels of God. They hailed the advent of the promised Messiah. They proclaimed "Glory to God in the "highest,—on earth peace; and good will to, "men." Then good old Simeon was heard to exclaim, "Now Lord, lettest thou thy servant "depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy "salvation."

Next, your eye will be more pointedly fixed on the "Lamb of God who taketh away the "sins of the world." You will trace him from—his manger, through a life of poverty,—of suffering and neglect, to that mournful night, when he first instituted the ordinance, you so shortly expect to celebrate.—You will listen to his last exhortations and prayers,—you will pursue him to the garden of Gethsemane. There, you will behold his tears and his bloody sweat—you will recall his agony and his resignation—you will trace him to the Jewish Sanhedrim,—to the bar of Pilate, and finally to his suspension on a cross. Behold he bleeds! he cries, "It is finished."—He expires! For three hours universal *darkness* prevails—The veil of the temple is rent,—the earth is convulsed, while the spectators of this awful scene returns to Jerusalem, smiting their breasts with horror and consternation.

But soon a brighter scene appears—you behold the great Redeemer bursting the bands of death,—reviving the hopes of his dejected disciples,—ascending in their presence to heaven; leaving them an assurance of sending

down the Holy Spirit, as their *Comforter* and Guide.

You will naturally, my friend, after dwelling on these scenes, pursue the history of the church of Christ, through subsequent ages to the present day, and mark the care of the Lord Jesus in always preserving a chosen few, who have held his doctrines, maintained his institutions, and endeavoured closely to follow his example.

From the present period of general light, and of evangelic effort, let your views be extended to the time when "the heathen shall "be given to the Saviour as an inheritance, "and the uttermost parts of the earth for a "possession." And looking still further you will soon reach the age of millennial glory, and the final consummation of all things.—You will in the exercise of faith, behold "the heavens "passing away as a scroll, and the elements "melting with fervent heat."—You will see the once crucified Redeemer, coming on the clouds of heaven, surrounded by innumerable hosts of angels. You will see the dead arise,—the universe assembled,—the tribunal of the Judge,—the books opened, and the final separation of the righteous and the wicked.—You will meditate on the solemn sentence of eternal justice, to be passed on each son and daughter of Adam. To those on his right hand, "Come "ye blessed of my Father, inherit the king-"dom prepared for you from the foundation "of the world."—To those on the other,—"Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting "fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels."

In the anticipation of this solemn scene, you will naturally ask yourself, "what will then "be *my* destiny? Shall I be on the right hand "of my Judge, shall I hear his approving sen- "tence,—or shall I for ever be excluded from "his presence and kingdom?" Oh how solemn the thought!—how deeply interesting this final scene!

But while with your fellow christians, you are surrounding the table of your Divine Master,—while the emblems of his broken body, and shed blood, are presented to view,—while recalling the perfect example of the blessed Saviour, with all those instructive lessons, and rich consolations he has bequeathed to his disciples; while you feel that you are now admitted to a more intimate communion with this "King of kings," and like the beloved apostle, reposing on his bosom; or like the penitent Mary, bathing his feet with your tears; then is the moment for presenting those petitions which are nearest to your heart.—"My faith is weak," you will say, "Lord help my "unbelief." "My repentance is transient,—it is superficial;"—"Oh that my head were "waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears." "My heart is hard,—my temper unchastened. —I love the world, its pleasures, its honours, or its vanities, too much. Oh for purer affections, for greater love to God, and to my fellow men! Oh for a greater detachment from the world, for more ardent desires of increased holiness, and a nearer conformity to the example of my Redeemer."

Or have you some dear friends or relations,—parents, brothers, sisters, or more distant kindred, who have never been brought to right views on the subject of religion?

Now is the time to intercede for such. Say to your Divine Master—"Saviour of my soul—Oh hear me in behalf of these precious friends. Let these objects of my tenderest affection, experience the efficacy of thy love. Penetrate their hearts by thy grace,—call them from the world,—unite them to thyself,—shew them in what true happiness consists,—convince them that separate from THEE, it were better they had never been born.—Oh sanctify them by thy Spirit, and make them fellow-heirs with thy true disciples, of that inheritance in the heavens, which thou hast in reserve for all who love thee truly, and prove their love by their obedience.

Think too my christian brother, while at your Master's table, of that *better feast* above, to which the hopes of believers should constantly be directed. Say to yourself, "the present is a communion of love; but it is a faint emblem of that more intimate communion which the "spirits of the just made perfect," enjoy with their Redeemer on high."

Here I am a stranger, and a sojourner,—I am in a state of exile from my father's house. But soon the "earthly house of this tabernacle "will be dissolved." May I then rise to a "house not made with hands, eternal in the "heavens." At the close of my present existence, may I be able to say with the great

apostle, "I am now ready to be offered, and "the time of my departure is at hand, I have "fought the good fight, I have finished my "course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there "is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, "which the Lord the righteous Judge, will "grant me at that day, and not to me only, "but to all them also that love his appear-"ing."

I remain as ever,
Very truly Your's.

LETTER XXVI.

My Dear Friend—

Yes, I do most sincerely congratulate you on the step you have taken,—on the choice you have made,—on the covenant you have now publicly sealed, and acknowledged.—Having partaken of the emblems of a dying Saviour's love,—having enlisted under his standard, and taken him as the Captain of your salvation; never hereafter for an instant forget that the *vows of God* are upon you, and that you have by a solemn sacrament, professed your allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Among the ancient Romans, "after their troops were levied," says a celebrated French

historian,* "every soldier took an oath to the consuls, or tribunes, by which they engaged—*to assemble at the consul's order, and not to quit the service without his permission;—to obey the orders of the officers, and to do their utmost to execute them,—not to retire either through fear, or to fly from the enemy; and not to quit their rank.*"—"This," adds the historian, "was not a *mere formality*,—nor a *ceremony purely external.* It was a very serious *act of religion*, sometimes attended with terrible imprecations, which made a strong impression on the mind; and was judged absolutely and indispensably necessary, and without which the soldiers could not fight against the enemy."

In like manner, Christians who come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, should consider themselves as *soldiers of the cross*—They have chosen their leader, under whose guidance they hope to pass through the wilderness of the present life, in their march to the heavenly Canaan.—They owe him unreserved confidence, devoted attachment, and unlimited obedience. Having taken "the sword of the "Spirit,"—having put on the "helmet of sal-"vation,"—having received "the shield of "faith," and being shod with "the prepara-"tion of the gospel," they have one plain path of duty prescribed;—to march forward, not in their own strength, but sustained, and guided, by their great leader, to that victory, of which

* Rollin's Arts and Sciences, Vol. I. page 310.

they are assured, through the resistless energy of their almighty Sovereign.

In this warfare my friend, you are not to expect a perfect exemption from all "hard-"ship,"—*This*, you are "to endure as a good "soldier of Christ,"—you have "taken his "yoke upon you;" but eventually you will find it "easy,"—"his burden," will by habit, become more and more "light."—Though called to take up your "cross daily," and to "crucify the flesh with the affections and "lusts;" yet with every act of self-denial, or mortification, you will find an attending consolation, that will more than compensate for every sacrifice you are called to make.

In pursuing your journey, you may be scorched by the burning rays of passion, or temptation; but while passing over this sterile region, you may calculate on a supply of heavenly manna to satisfy your hunger, and on a refreshing stream from the "Rock" CHRIST JESUS, to allay your thirst.—You may often be lost and bewildered in your march, but you will have your Saviour "as a pillar of cloud "by day, and a pillar of fire by night," to guide your wanderings;—you may be annoyed by fiery serpents; but remember the "brazen "serpent," and through this type, look to him who was "lifted up" on the cross, to expiate the sins of the world.

Do not expect because you have taken the livery of Christ, that you are to be exempt from trials or afflictions. These are often sent in kindness,—"Whom the Lord loveth, he

"chasteneth." But amid your severest sufferings, remember that you have a compassionate Friend above, who will not suffer you to be tried beyond what you are able to bear, and with every trial, will grant you the consolation of his grace.

Having now made a public profession of your faith in Christ, you ask whether there is any *test* by means of which you can obtain satisfactory assurance of your having partaken *worthily* of the Lord's Supper?

On this subject the most perfect christian on earth, may sometimes entertain doubts:—for he feels himself to be imperfect; constantly liable to sin, whenever exposed to temptation.—He is sensible of much indwelling corruption, and comparing himself with the perfect standard of the law of God, he has daily something to repent of. Still however, possessing an honest and ardent desire to overcome every temptation; if he finds his love to God, and to his fellow creatures strengthened, and that he is making *some* progress in the path of holiness; he may conclude that he has *not communed unworthily.*

When our blessed Lord was cautioning his disciples, to beware of those false teachers, "who came in sheep's clothing, but were inwardly, ravening wolves," he gives a sure criterion by which to distinguish a true disciple, from a false one.—"Ye shall know them," said he, "by their fruits.—Do men gather "grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?—Even "so every good tree brings forth good fruit—

" but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit—
" a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, (con-
" tinually) neither can a corrupt tree bring
" forth good fruit, (always.) By their fruits,
" ye shall know them." (Matt. vii. 12—23. John xv. 36.)

To these *fruits*, the apostles of our Lord, in the epistles addressed to the churches which they had planted, make frequent allusion. " The *fruit* of the Spirit," says the apostle Paul, " is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, " gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, tempe-
" rance.—Against those there is no law." (Gal. v. 22.) and again, " The *fruit* of the Spirit is " in all goodness, righteousness and truth." (Eph. v. 9.) So also, by him, (Jesus Christ,) " let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God " continually, that is the *fruit* of our lips, giv-
" ing thanks to his name." (Heb. xiii. 15.)

Let it then be your constant endeavour, after a season of communion, very closely to compare your conversation and deportment, with the perfect standard of the gospel—Although you cannot in this state of probation attain to sinless perfection, yet if you are sensible of warmer zeal in the service of God,—of greater affection for your fellow creatures,—but more especially for those who are of " the " house-hold of faith."—If you find that the power of evil propensities is subdued,—that pride, anger, revenge, covetousness, vanity, with every unlawful desire is brought under the controul of conscience and the judgment—If you find yourself more indifferent about

those concerns of time, which in any degree interfere with the interests of eternity—that you have "all peace and joy in believing;" then rest assured that *fruits* like these, can only spring from the soil of a "good and ho-"nest heart," animated by true faith.

Remember too from the warfare in which you have engaged there is no desertion, without disgrace—It will be expected of you always to be *pressing forward.* The life of a christian is a continual ascent. Having "put his hand to "the plough, he is not to look back." Although every christian is not expected to hold the *first* rank in the church of Christ, all are to press forward towards perfection. In the rank and station in which their Master has placed them, it is their duty to remain, and there, to fight manfully, until he shall call them to another.

Your resolution should be the same with that of the apostle Paul—"I count not myself "to have apprehended, (that is, I have not "reached the object of my pursuit;) but this "one thing I do, forgetting those things which "are behind, and reaching forward to those "things which are before, I press toward the "mark, for the prize of the high calling of God "in Christ Jesus."

There is no remaining stationary in the christian life. We are on a stream that will bear us rapidly down, if we indolently fold our arms, through a false security, in our character and profession. Unless we vigorously exert our powers to make advances in the christian life, we shall unquestionably recede.—If we bury

our talent in the earth; we shall assuredly incur the censure of our Judge at last, and the punishment allotted to the "unprofitable servant." "The path of the just is as the light, which "shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day," "Be thou faithful *unto death*," says the Alpha and Omega—"and I will give thee a "crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.)

But you ask again my friend, "Whether there are not certain *renewed obligations*, under which believers bring themselves, by an attendance on the Lord's Supper?"

That there are such, appears to be the general opinion of Theologians; though we find nothing very express on this point in the New Testament. The duties resulting from a participation of this ordinance are rather matters of inference, than of positive commandment.

In answer to the following question, viz.—"Under what obligations do professing christians come, when they celebrate the Lord's Supper?"

Professor Osterwald in his Catechism, gives the subjoined answer,—

"They solemnly declare themselves to be the disciples of Jesus Christ,—they engage to live and die in the profession of his religion,—to be governed in all their principles and conduct, by the rules of the gospel,—and "denying "ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, "righteously, and godly, in the present world." (Tit. ii. 12.)

It is not unusual with devout communicants, on returning from this sacred ordinance to feel

their minds more elevated and composed,—their faith more lively,—their hopes of future happiness more confirmed,—and their love to God, and their benevolence to man, called into more vigorous exercise.—When Moses came down from mount Sinai, after holding converse with the Deity, "The skin of his face shone," so that he was obliged to veil his countenance, in order to conceal its brightness from the people.

In like manner, when the first martyr Stephen, stood before the Jewish Sanhedrim in defence of his faith, his visage glowed with a splendour, more than human; "For all that "sat in the council looking stedfastly on him, "saw his face, as it had been the face of an "angel." (Acts vi. 15.)

In the same manner, though in a far inferior degree, will the aspect,—the manners,—the whole deportment of those, who have been at a sacramental feast, shew, that "they have been with "Jesus,"—that they have caught a portion of his spirit, and are resolved, so far as human frailty will permit, to obey his precepts, and follow his commands.

Our blessed Saviour immediately after his resurrection, was pleased to make himself known to two of his disciples, returning from Jerusalem to Emmaus "in the breaking of "bread." But no sooner had he vanished from their sight, than they exclaimed,—"Did not "our hearts burn within us, while he talked with "us by the way, and while he opened to us the "Scriptures?"

How often in like manner, is the Lord Jesus made known, more clearly and delightfully to the believing soul, in the *broken bread* exhibited at the table of communion.—Although he is far removed from human view, yet beheld through the medium of faith,—which brings heavenly objects, otherwise invisible, distinctly before the vision of the soul;—he attracts the most perfect love, and inspires the most elevating and consolatory hopes. Though raised "far above all principality and power, and "might, and dominion,—and above every "name that is named, not only in this world, "but in that which is to come;" (Eph. i. 21.) yet as the omniscient God, he knows every event, and every thought that exists throughout the universe. Seated on his throne of unlimited power, he dispenses the graces of his Spirit, and the blessings of his gospel to the penitent, and the humble. In some favoured moment, while the christian is at the table of his Lord, if he can catch but a solitary glimpse of the Divine glory, —if but a ray descends on his heart from the splendours of the third heaven,—if in the exercise of an ardent love to his Redeemer, he can feel that love reflected into his own bosom, for

("*Love, and love only, is a loan for love;")

to what a height will he feel himself raised above the cares, and the vanities,—the frowns, and flatteries of the present state!—Buoyant with the hope of a purer happiness than earth can boast, he pursues his duty with cheerfulness, and supports the pains and infirmities of nature with

* Dr. Young.

resignation. "Justified by faith, he has peace "with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ." Grateful for the smallest bounties of Providence, he endures the privations of life with composure. Having his eye always directed to the retributions of eternity,—his mind becomes ardently engaged in "looking for that "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of "the great God, and our Saviour Jesus "Christ."

I am truly your's.

LETTER XXVII.

My Dear Friend—

My last letter stated *very generally* some of those renewed obligations under which every communicant is brought, by an admission to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This subject is deeply interesting, and may be advantageously pursued somewhat more in detail.

A venerable Theologian,* states the following as the duties subsequent to a participation of this solemn ordinance.—"An increase of all those pious inclinations and affections, which were then kindled at the altar of the Lord, a

* Stackhouse, page 625.

cherishing of those influences of grace, which descended on our hearts in this communion,—a watchful care and endeavour in our lives, to approve ourselves in some measure worthy of the great honour and favour of being admitted to so near an approach to God:—a pursuance of those resolutions, and a performance of those vows and engagements, which we made on that solemn occasion;—and finally, a fixed and permanent consideration that by the breach of such resolutions, and the violation of such engagements, our sins will be aggravated, and our guilt increased; and that by the relapse of our souls into so grievous a distemper, our spiritual strength will be sadly impaired; and consequently our comforts abated, shaken, and our eternal state very much endangered."

These views of duty are general,—Let us endeavour to state more precisely, the duties which appear to follow an admission to the Lord's table. The first I shall mention, is improvement in knowledge. In order to "discern "the Lord's body;" in this sacred ordinance, knowledge is indispensable.—That knowledge can best be obtained by a diligent perusal of the sacred Scriptures. These should constitute a part of the daily reading of every worthy communicant. Other books may be read for amusement,—for general instruction, and as useful auxiliaries to the sacred volume, but *this* should be like our *daily bread.*—It is that which must supply nourishment to the soul, and which alone can give us just ideas of our duty, and of the way to heaven.

"Formerly," says M. Durand,* "christian families were accustomed to draw riches both new and old from this sacred repository. Believers were anxious to enjoy the consolations of the Bible. They read it daily,—they read it with attention,—with humility and veneration.—The father rehearsed to his children the wonders of the Most High—He conversed of his miracles,—of his testimonies, and of his goodness.—And what precious fruits resulted from these exercises. The children early learnt to know the *God of their father*. The sweet fragrance of the gospel was diffused through the family, and the church universally felt its influence."

"Oh happy days! when shall we have their return. If we but *knew the gift of God*,—if we knew what nourishment a hungry soul derives from an attentive perusal of the sacred volume; we should not then be substituting in its place, those light and dangerous books, calculated more to amuse, than to instruct, which are the cause of so many miseries to individuals, and to the church."

But to a diligent study of the Scriptures, we should add, increased reflection on the important matter they contain. "Search the "Scriptures," was the advice of our Lord to those incredulous Jews, who doubted his mission, and adhered to the Mosaic œconomy;—but the precept is no less obligatory on his professed followers. We are not however, merely to *search* them, but to *meditate*† upon

* Vol. I. page 64. † Tim. iv. 15.

them.—We are to reflect on them as the appointed means of conviction, of conversion, and of progressive improvement in every christian grace and virtue. The Jews at Berea to whom Paul and Silas preached, were applauded as being "more noble than those of Thessalonica, "in that they received the word with all rea- "diness of mind, and searched the Scrip- "tures *daily*, whether these things were so." (Acts xvii. 11.) And our Divine Master, in his last intercessory prayer for his disciples, says, "Sanctify them by thy truth,—*thy word is truth.*" That word is calculated to convey light to the mind—It directs the conscience, and furnishes the best motives to regulate the deportment of believers. It strengthens their faith, nourishes their hope, enlarges their charity. In a word it is like their daily food which must be digested by frequent meditation, before it can invigorate, and support the spiritual part of our nature.

How express and solemn were the injunctions of God by his servant Moses, on the Jewish nation, to remember and obey the commandments he had given them; and how admirable were the means ordered to produce this effect! "Ye shall diligently keep the com- "mandments of the Lord your God and his "testaments, and his statutes which he hath "commanded you—And thou shalt teach them "diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of "them when thou sittest in thine house, and "when thou walkest by the way, and when "thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

"And thou shalt bind them for a sign on "thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets "between thine eyes, and thou shalt write "them on the posts of thy house, and on thy "gates." (Deut. vi. 7, 8, 9—17.)

Joshua is directed by God, "to meditate "upon the book of the law, day and night." And the Psalmist says, "I will meditate on "thy precepts, and have respect to thy ways. "—I will meditate on *all* thy works, and talk "of thy doings." (Psalm cxix. 15. cxliii. 5.)

Such were the injunctions of God, to Old Testament saints, and such was their practice. Happy were it for christians in the present day, if they more diligently read, and more profoundly reflected on those sacred records, which are calculated to make those who study them aright, "wise unto salvation."

But to reading and reflection we must add *prayer* to God, in order that his word may have full efficacy on the heart and life.

The good seed although sown on good ground, will not spring up and bear fruit abundantly, without the dews of heavenly grace,—without the animating influences of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the appointed medium of intercourse with heaven. It is the vital breath of devotion. It ascends to God from the altar of a devout heart, as naturally as incense from those altars that were consecrated to his worship under the ancient dispensation.

It is a duty positively enjoined. "Ask," says our Divine Law-giver, "and ye shall "receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and

"it shall be opened to you. (Matt. vii. 7.) "Be careful for nothing," says an apostle, "but in every thing by prayer and supplica- "tion, with thanksgiving let your requests be "made known to God." (Phil. iv. 61.) And for our encouragement in prayer we are assured that "all things whatsoever we shall "ask in prayer, *believing*, we shall receive." (Matt. xx. 21.)

"Pray'r was appointed to convey,
The blessings God designs to give;
Long as they live, should christians pray,
For only while they pray, they live.

'Tis pray'r supports the soul that 's weak,
Tho' thought be broken—language lame;
Pray, if thou can'st—or canst not speak,
But pray with faith in JESUS' name.

Pray'r makes the darken'd cloud withdraw,
Pray'r climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings ev'ry blessing from above."

Private prayer in a peculiar manner is enjoined by our Lord, "When thou prayest," says he, "enter into thy closet and when thou "hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which "is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in "secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 6.)

These precepts were supported by his own example. What he enjoined, he practised himself. On one occasion "rising up a great while "before day, he went out and departed to a "solitary place, and there prayed." (Mark i. 35.) At another time, "when he had sent the "multitude away, he went up unto a moun-

"tain to pray, and was there alone." (Luke vi. 12.) And on another occasion, "withdrew "himself into the wilderness, and prayed." (Luke v. 6.)

Prayer is at once a duty and a privilege. It is the homage we render to God; in which we acknowledge our dependence on him, and the obligations we owe him.—It is an act of humiliation, in which we confess our offences against his laws,—our subjection to his authority,—our unworthiness and depravity. It is the appointed mean of making known our wants to our Father in heaven,—not to inform him, but that we ourselves may be suitably impressed with the sense of our dependence on him, for every blessing we enjoy.

It is not to instruct him in the number and aggravation of our sins; but that we ourselves may feel their weight and malignity, and be induced to quit the path of evil, for that of uprightness.—It is that in confessing our transgressions, we may obtain pardon for past offences, and strength to overcome every subsequent temptation.

In approaching the throne of the Deity in prayer, professing christians should endeavour always to remember that they cannot come with a reverence too profound, or a humility too deep. How august is that Being to whom our addresses are made!—No less than the Creator and Sovereign of the universe.—It is he who "walketh the circuit of the heavens," and fills the immensity of space.—"He laid "the foundation of the earth; and the heavens

" are the work of his hands. The sea is his, he " made it, and his hands formed the dry land. " —He hath measured the waters in the hol- " low of his hand, and meted out the heaven " with a span, and comprehended the dust of " the earth in a measure."—" In his hand is " the soul of every living thing." " Who is " like unto thee," mighty Jehovah! " glorious " in holiness,—fearful in praises,—doing won- " ders."*

On the other hand, what are *we*,—wretched worms of the dust,—frail, erring, and depraved mortals,—offending daily against the greatest of Beings, and the best of Fathers;—slaves of sin, whose desires and aims all seem to be confined to the transient and uncertain possessions, pleasures, and honours of the present state;—the sport of evil passions, and often the willing subjects of the arch enemy of God and man.

In truth, by nature we are very frail, and constantly exposed to error and suffering.—Our existence,—our enjoyments,—our hopes of future happiness, all depend on the Being we address. Let him but withdraw his supporting hand for a moment, and we return to that state of non-existence, from which, by his goodness, we first came into being. If his blessing on our industry or enterprize is withheld, we are reduced to poverty and want.—His, are our health, our friends, our reputation, our social and domestic comforts. All are his gift, and all are liable to be taken from us at his pleasure. Can we then too humbly acknowledge

* Exod. xv. 11.

our dependence on him, especially when we approach him in acts of worship?

But our prayers in order to obtain the objects of our desires, should be presented in the name, and through the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ;—they should be fervent,—sincere—in a firm trust in God,—importunate,—and for such things, as upon the whole, are for our best interest, and agreeable to the will of God.—And if made with dispositions like these, we may rest assured that our prayers will be answered. We may lawfully ask for prosperity, for health, for long life, as well for ourselves, as for those whom we love; but whether all these, or any of them will be for our ultimate good, is better known to God, than to ourselves, and should therefore be asked, with entire submission to his unerring determination. "Thy will, and "not ours, Oh Father, be done on earth, as "it is in Heaven."

Yet there are *some* things for which we may ask with confidence and fervour; knowing that they are unquestionably in conformity with the Divine will and perfections.—We may importunately ask for the enlightening and sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit; for he has promised to bestow these on all, who ask them with sincerity.—We may solicit the pardon of sin,—the increase of faith, and all the blessed *fruits of righteousness*.—We may ask for exemption from suffering,—from affliction, and from temptation, beyond what we are able to endure:—and should we through ignorance

or infirmity, be induced to ask for any thing inconsistent with our highest interest here or hereafter; we should even pray that our requests may be refused.

It is not necessary that we should be very minute and particular, in our petitions to God. "He knoweth what we need before we ask "him; and we are not heard for our much "speaking."—One fervent sigh—one repentant tear,—a cordial acknowledgment of our dependance,—a firm trust in his goodness;—though breathed in the silence of the closet, or the solitude of the desert, will not escape the notice of him, to whom every thought of the humblest worshipper, is known.

It is of no small importance that we should have *stated times* assigned for the discharge of this duty; for although we may pray with as much acceptance in the forest, or the field, as in our closets, or in the church; yet unless we make it a *rule* to observe this duty at stated seasons, we shall relax in our attention, and lose that fervour of devotion, which from the constitution of our nature is preserved only by subjecting our minds to the discipline of stated rules.

Never then my dear friend, suffer any worldly business, or amusements, to interfere with this sacred employment.—Be fervent,—be constant,—be sincere in this important duty, till it be exchanged for the nobler exercise of praise in the temple above, where surrounded by angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, you shall forever unite with them in

ascribing "blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and power, and might, unto our God for ever and ever."

I remain as ever,
Your's truly.

LETTER XXVIII.

My Dear Friend—

That the professed disciples of Christ, stand on higher ground than mere nominal christians, is a matter too obvious for controversy, or doubt. They are "like a city "set on a hill that cannot be hid." They are styled in Scripture the "salt of the earth," and "the light of the world." True it is, their light is borrowed. It is but the *reflected* rays of the great Sun of Righteousness. Still they are commanded "to let their light," however faint it may be, "so shine before men, "that others seeing their good works may "glorify their Father who is in heaven." Hence results a most important duty, which is peculiarly obligatory on believers who have made an open profession of their faith in Christ. They come under *renewed* obligations "to "walk circumspectly," not only to *pray*, but to *watch*, lest they fall into temptation.

When the labourer whose industry and care have procured him a decent competency, is by some unexpected misfortune, reduced to his former narrow circumstances; we sympathize in his sufferings, much less than we do for the misfortunes of one, who from affluence and ease, is reduced to penury and distress. Such is the difference between a christian of high standing who has made a public avowal of his faith, at the table of the Lord, and one who professes simply to be a worshipper. When the former is guilty of any departure from the strict rules of the gospel, his conduct is censured with peculiar asperity, and the inconsistency between his profession and practice, is marked with shades more dark and offensive. This conduct casts a reproach on the Master he has professed to follow. It induces a suspicion on his fellow communicants—It confirms the unbelieving in their errors. "Wherein" they exultingly ask, "are these professed followers of Christ, better than ourselves, and if making an open profession of faith, does not exalt and purify the character, is it not better to keep aloof from an ordinance, so solemn as that of the Lord's Supper?"

How cautious then should all christians be "who have named the name of Christ,"—who have publicly avowed themselves to be his disciples, carefully "to depart from all ini-"quity." They should *watch* their own hearts most diligently, since "out of it are the issues "of life." They should watch their temper, lest by any sudden indulgence of anger, resentment, or any other dangerous passion they

should wound the peace of others, and their own reputation.

They should in youth, *watch* against the allurements of pleasure,—against excess in amusements,—in dress,—in mirth, and in the indulgence of their appetites.

In more advanced life, they should watch against a too ardent pursuit of gain,—against an excessive desire of fame and distinction,—and against an extreme indulgence of ease.—At all times professed christians should set a *watch* over their lips.—They should aim at keeping their tongue ("that unruly member") in constant subjection. The discord that is so often produced in families,—in neighbourhoods, and among the most intelligent and exemplary members of society; by indiscreet, or false reports and surmises, should impress communicants with the vast importance of watching against every "idle word" that might injure the reputation, the peace, or the usefulness of others.

Christians, who have made a profession of their faith by partaking of the Lord's Supper, should be extremely circumspect in the choice of their society.

The world very naturally forms its opinion of individuals, by the character of their associates. Persons of similar tastes and habits, are known to be most fond of each other's society. As the dissolute can take no pleasure in associating with the virtuous, so there can be no congenial feeling,—no cordial union,—between sincere believers, and persons whose supreme

affections are absorbed by the present world. True it is that the necessary calls of business, must and will render a daily intercourse with worldly men indispensable; but this intercourse will usually cease with the business that rendered it necessary. There will be no close intimacy,—no conformity of character,—no yielding of principle,—on the heart of the true christian.—Remembering the declaration of our Lord to his disciples,—"Ye are not of the "world," and the advice of his apostle, "Be "not conformed to this world;" he endeavours to keep himself aloof from those snares and temptations, to which every believer is exposed, who associates too intimately with persons whose habits or principles are very dissimilar to his own.

Although "conformity to the world," at the commencement of christianity was a very different matter from what it now is, in christian countries; yet the spirit of the precept is substantially the same.—Then indeed, to be "conformed to the world,"—was to be the slave of idolatry, and of the most degrading vices; it was to worship imaginary deities, whose very service consisted in the indulgence of appetites which reduced man to a level with brutes.—Now from the diffusion of the light of revelation, the disgusting superstitions of Paganism, have disappeared in many regions of the globe; yet from the depravity of our nature, the *majority of men are wicked.*—What is called the *world?*—that portion of our race who have not been enlightened by the

truths of the gospel,—who pursue the wealth, the honours, or pleasures of life, as their *chief object*,—who concentrate their views, and devote their *supreme regard*, to present pursuits; forgetful, or negligent of the great end of their being. Between such persons, and sincere, devoted followers of the Lord Jesus, there is such a diversity of feeling and pursuit, as precludes all close, and unreserved attachment, and intercourse.

It is lamentable to reflect, that even among professing christians so many have been found, who, forgetting their obligations "to live righ-"teously, soberly, and godly," have, to the disgrace of the christian name, allowed themselves to indulge in sensual pleasures to a criminal excess. Instead of "avoiding the appear-"ance of evil," they boldly venture beyond the bounds of strict temperance and discretion,—wound their own reputation,—their own peace,—bring a reproach on religion, and "crucify afresh the Lord who bought them."

To prevent consequences so painful, and so disgraceful; precepts like the following were left on the records of inspired truth.

"Let your moderation be known unto all "men." (Phil. iv. 5.) "Be not drunk with "wine, wherein is excess." (Eph. v. 18.) "Take heed," said our Lord to his apostles, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged "with *surfeiting* and *drunkenness*." (Luke xxi. 34.) "Let us walk honestly," said the apostle Paul, "as in the day,—not in rioting "and drunkenness,—not in chambering and

"wantonness;—but put ye on the Lord Jesus, "and make not provision for the flesh, to ful- "fil the *lusts* thereof." (Rom. xiii. 13, 14.)

To violate the precepts we have just transcribed, would be clear evidence of a criminal conformity to the world. But there are cases in regard to which, intelligent christians may differ in opinion,—under such circumstances we must be governed by general rules, taking care not to let our judgments be unduly warped by our prejudices, or inclinations.

The following rules may be found useful to professing christians, who are doubtful of the line of conduct they ought to pursue, under circumstances of peculiar temptation.

1. When they are invited to partake of pleasures not forbidden by any law, Divine or human, (the *abuse* of which renders them criminal,) always to *keep within*, rather than to *exceed* the bounds of moderation.

2. A second rule for professing christians is, that they should cautiously indulge in amusements,—or pleasures,—allowed to be innocent, the direct *tendency* of which is to excite passions or desires, of a dangerous, or unlawful nature.

3. They should always be ready to sacrifice even innocent pleasures, to the performance of a known and important duty.

4. That amusements should always be regarded as a relaxation; and not as a business. They should be used as a restorative, and not as food.—Whenever therefore, they are pursued to the injury either of the health,

estate, or character; they become criminal, and deserve censure.

In order to fortify the mind in adhering to the rules here laid down, it will be useful to remember, that all excess tends to impair the faculties of the mind, and the health of the body. Pleasure too frequently enjoyed, or pursued beyond the bounds of moderation, enervates the whole system, and degrades the character. Its effects are, to create a disgust for serious and useful pursuits.—By relaxing the nerves, it leaves the mind a prey to melancholy, and in a state altogether unfit for resisting the temptations of the world,—unfit for encountering the inevitable pains and sorrows, to which human life is exposed,—and more especially for meeting the "last enemy" death, with composure and triumph.

"A prevailing habit of dissipation," says the respectable Dr. Maclaine,*—"too great an attachment to the pleasures of sense,—too frequent approaches to scenes of luxury and frivolity, corrupt the taste for virtuous enjoyment;—for the pleasures of reason, faith, and religious hope.—They contract the mind, and extinguish the mild flame of those pure and elevated desires, which aspire after immortality, and render its prospect delightful. There are unhappily, people in the world, who have scarce an idea of any enjoyment beyond what the apostle calls the "lusts of the flesh, the "lusts of the eye, and the pride of life." Talk to such of future happiness,—of the dignity of

* Discourse, VI. page 115.

a well regulated mind,—of the pleasures of order, sanctity, and benevolence; you might as well talk of sounds to the deaf, or of colours to the blind. This can never be the case with true christians; yet even *they* ought to be on their guard against all approaches to such a state of degradation. For there is always more or less caution necessary in the enjoyment of sensible objects, which though innocent in its nature, may be dangerous in its measure; and is always dangerous, when it is not counterbalanced by pleasures and enjoyments of a nobler kind."

When urged by persons of a worldly character, to engage in fashionable amusements, or in pleasures of a doubtful nature; professing christians should consider how far such indulgence would consist with their religious character.—Whether acts of levity or dissipation would not prove a stumbling-block to others; —whether christians are not called to set an example of moderation and self-denial, to a censorious world.—To cultivate purity of manners,—to maintain a dignity, joined with meekness of deportment, and by keeping aloof from scenes of boisterous mirth, or intemperate festivity; to be always prepared for those sudden and serious changes in life, which fall to the lot of the largest portion of the human race.

Above all, professing christians should keep their eye intently fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ,—the only perfect model of character, that ever appeared on earth. By obedience to

his precepts, and by following his example, so far as is consistent with human frailty, they would always be safe, and would be daily laying a sure foundation for present enjoyment and for never ending bliss.

But in studying to avoid a *criminal* conformity to the world, christians should be careful not to fall into the opposite extreme.—Seclusion from society and its innocent enjoyments, may be indulged to excess. Many pious professors by interdicting to themselves and others, pleasures, not forbidden by the word of God,—and which become censurable and injurious only by abuse, have made a religion, intended to console and rejoice the heart, a system of gloom and terror, especially to the young;—and have thus thrown a most formidable bar across the path of sincere, but timid piety.

Youth is the spring time of life—It is the season of hilarity,—sometimes of giddy joy—Its ardour may be controuled and turned into a right channel, but to extinguish it, would be like the extinction of life. The adversary of souls never suggested a more powerful, but delusive argument to the young mind, against religion than that it was adverse to innocent pleasures—No sooner do young converts begin to feel the hopes and joys of piety, than they resign the inferior pleasures of sense, and retire from the fascinating amusements of gay or fashionable life.

On this subject, an excellent author* before quoted, remarks—that, "as our Lord was so cau-

* Dr. Newcombe's Observations on our Lord's conduct, p. 885.

tious not to give his religion a disgusting appearance, its true friends should follow his example. Not expecting in any man a deadness to human society, and human enjoyments,—not exacting austerities, which God has not commanded, not laying great stress on indifferent, or frivolous observances, which serve only to burden and disquiet men—not prescribing a particular kind of food, on certain days, and at certain seasons, to all christians—in all places; but for the most part leaving to general rules, and to private discretion, the total and partial—the stated and occasional abstinence from the lawful gratification of our lawful appetites."

Thus preserving a happy medium between the levity of an unthinking world, and the solitude and abstinence of a monastery; the prudent christian will hold the even tenor of his way—enjoying the innocent pleasures of life without excess, and by his moderation, temperance and superiority to the little passions which agitate the bustling sons of earth, show that he has higher aims, more exalted pleasures, and looks forward to the close of his present career, as the commencement of more transporting, and infinitely higher delights, than those of time and sense.

We have now taken a very brief view, of some of the *renewed obligations* under which professing christians come, in consequence of their admission to the table of the Lord. Under this head we might go into a consideration of the various duties which they owe to God—their neighbour, and themselves. But this would embrace too wide a field of discussion.

It will perhaps be sufficient to remark, that in the discharge of these duties, professing christians should always be pre-eminent. These are sacred duties—they are enjoined by the authority of a Divine Law-giver; they should be performed from the most exalted motives, and they have the promise of a reward, perfect in its nature, and interminable in its duration—Go then professing believer, go from the table of your Master into the world, armed with the panoply of heaven—fight the good fight of faith, assured that when your combat is over, you will receive a crown of righteousness from the hand of him, who is at once the author and the finisher of your faith, and that you will be admitted to dwell for ever in his presence, where is "fulness of joy, and pleasures that "never end."

I am truly your's.

LETTER XXIX.

My Dear Friend—

From the contemplation of those peculiar *obligations* under which you have recently come, by a participation of the Lord's Supper, let me next lead you to a consideration of some of the peculiar *benefits and con-*

solations which ought always, and which do usually accompany the worthy celebration of this sacred ordinance.

Let the infidel, and the devotee of the present world allege with a like character of old, "It is vain to serve the Lord," and contemptuously ask "what profit is there, that we have "kept his ordinances?" (Mal. iii. 14.) the sincere christian may reply in the words of the Royal preacher. "Happy is the man that "findeth wisdom, (viz. true religion,) and the "man that getteth understanding; for the "merchandize of it, is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than "of fine gold." (Prov. iii. 14. &c.) Or he can reply in the words of an inspired apostle, "godliness is profitable in all things; having "promise of the life that now is, and of that "which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

Yes! blessed be God, the religion of Christ was not intended to make us wretched here—and to compensate us with *promises* only, of a happiness to come. We are not supported by *hope* alone, to the exclusion of present enjoyment. Were this strictly the case, and did we gain nothing at present by the service of God, beside the assured prospect of perfect and endless felicity hereafter; to such a being as man, whose life is a vapour, and whose duration is a span,—this reward would be cheaply earned. It would be an ample recompence for the pain, and sorrow, and toil of many such lives as we pass on earth. But the advantages of piety are not confined to the

mere *anticipation* of future bliss. They are realized in the daily experience of a countless multitude of professed christians.

The religion of Christ is calculated to render mortals happy *here*, as well as *hereafter*. Its tendency is to restore them to that state of purity and happiness from which our first parents fell; and to make Earth what Eden once was—the scene of perfect order, holiness and joy.

"Godliness has promise of the life that now "is." It interdicts under the most awful sanctions, all those excesses in the pursuit of pleasure and every abuse of those gifts of providence that were intended for our present support and comfort. It forbids every departure from that moderate exercise of our faculties, and from that temperate use of the blessings of providence that are so essential to the true enjoyment of our existence on earth.

It commands us to "put away all anger, "malice, revenge," and every other evil passion; those inveterate enemies to substantial happiness—It commands us to live peaceably with all men, and by the exercise of universal benevolence, in all the relations of life, to promote *our own;* while we advance the felicity of *others*.

It assures to us the respect and esteem of the wise and good. It extorts the approbation, even of the irreligious. Around all who are sincere and consistent in their profession, and in the practice of the duties, of religion, a protecting influence is cast, which turns aside the shafts of envy and of slander.

True religion confers a solid peace of conscience. It inspires a firm trust in God—a superiority over the cares and anxieties of life, which no outward circumstances can communicate. The melancholy retrospect of a life, spent in criminal pursuits, or in the indulgence of every evil propensity—the corrosion of remorse for time wasted—talents abused—for wealth prostituted—for opportunities of improvement, or of doing good, irrecoverably lost; do not rise up like spectres, to haunt the imagination, or disturb the repose of him, who has from early life made religion his study and pursuit. No appalling fears of death, or of future judgment, in the hour of adversity, or on the bed of sickness, torment him. Resigning all trust in his own merits, and confiding in the all-sufficient atonement of his Saviour, the penitent offender is assured of the pardon of his sins, however numerous, or aggravated, and firmly confides in the promise of Eternal Truth, that when he quits this tabernacle of clay, he will have a "mansion "above—a house not made with hands eter-"nal in the heavens."

When the seeds of real piety take root in good and honest hearts, they spring up, like the flowers of spring, and exhale their fragrance far and wide. They scatter benefits through the domestic, and the social circle. They bear much precious fruit in the family, in the church, and in the various relations of civil life.

"In purity, temperance, and self-govern-

ment," says Dr. Blair, "there is found a satisfaction in the mind, similar to what results from the enjoyment of perfect health in the body. A man is then conscious that all is sound within; there is nothing that gnaws his spirit, that makes him ashamed of himself, or discomposes his calm and orderly enjoyment of life. His conscience testifies that he is acting honourably. He enjoys the satisfaction of being master of himself. He feels that no one can accuse him of degrading his character by base pleasures, or low pursuits; and he knows that he will be honoured and esteemed by those whose honour and esteem he would most desire; all which are sensations most pleasing and gratifying to every human heart."

In regard to the acquisition of wealth, all other things being equal, good men certainly have an advantage over the wicked. They enjoy a more general confidence. Important and lucrative trusts are often confided to them, which are withheld from others who are not under the controul of religious principle. Although as a *general* principle, "time and "chance happen alike to all men;" yet in many striking instances, do we see Providence directing the affairs of pious characters, and crowning their industry, or enterprize, with remarkable success.

But it is not so much in the *acquisition*, as in the *enjoyment* of property, that the difference is seen between the sincere christian, and the devotee of the world.—The one considers himself only as a steward of the bounties of

heaven,—when therefore, he sustains a loss, he submits to it with cheerfulness, believing the property bestowed, to have been but a temporary loan, which he who made, had a right to resume, at pleasure.—On the other hand,—the son of earth, regarding himself as absolute proprietor of his possessions, feels every loss with ten fold acuteness,—from inattention to the tenure on which every earthly possession is held, and the right of him who gave, to take it away, at any moment.

The pious man suffers not wealth to become an idol. If denied him, or if taken from him by misfortune, he looks up to heaven with thankfulness, for the most humble enjoyments he may be allowed to retain,—and represses every sigh of dissatisfaction, or complaint, over casualities or privations, beyond his controul.—Not so with the man destitute of religious principles. Under misfortune, he is depressed and discontented. His vanity,—his avarice,—or his ambition are wounded. "His gods are taken from him, and what shall he do."—He sees not a Father's hand, in these untoward events,—chastening him for his good.—He has no trust in Providence,—and derives no support, from the assurance, that "all things are "made to work for good to those that love "God."

Nothing is more true, than "that the little "which a righteous man hath, is better than "the wealth of many wicked."—He enjoys his mediocrity with gratitude to the Giver,—with trust in his future goodness,—and shares

it cheerfully and liberally, with those who have claims on his care, or his benevolence.

But it is not on the deductions of his own reason, or the flattery of his own illusive hope, that the devout christian rests.—He has the sure word of prophecy,—the inspired oracles of divine truth, as the foundation of his confidence. There he is instructed, that "The "Lord will not suffer the righteous to famish," (Prov. x. 3.) that "he that walketh righteously, "and speaketh uprightly, bread shall be given "him, and his water shall be sure." (Isaiah xxxiii. 15, 16.)

He is enjoined by his Saviour, not to indulge any undue anxiety about food or raiment,—as his "heavenly Father knoweth that he hath "need of these things;"—and by an inspired apostle, to "Let his conversation be without "covetousness;"—to be "content with such "things as he has,—and having food and rai-"ment, therewith to be content." (1 Tim. vi. 8. Heb. xiii. 5.)

Promises and injunctions like these, drawn from the sacred volume,—have an authority,—a weight,—and energy on the understanding, and the heart;—which make the balance of comfort preponderate in favour of the man who fears God, beyond that of him who neither reads, nor respects the precepts and promises of Divine Revelation.

But "godliness has promise of the life that "now is," pre-eminently under severe affliction.

There are evils which "flesh is heir to,"—

for which wealth can purchase no remedy,—and over which, the tenderest sympathy can only shed the unavailing tear. There are pains of body, and anxieties of mind, beyond the controul of any human agency. What a scene of trial and misery, is the life of the greatest portion of the human family!—But our sufferings do not always originate, nor are they confined to ourselves alone. Our sympathy with the afflictions of others, often becomes the source of our keenest anguish. As members of society, we feel for the sufferings of the fatherless, and the widow,—for the destitute, and friendless children of poverty and want.—As christians, we feel more acutely for the sufferings of fellow christians, who are members of "the same household of faith."—But it is in our domestic circle, where our tenderest feelings are excited,—it is here that the deepest wounds are made on our hearts.

Perhaps a beloved and venerated parent,—the stay,—the guide and solace, of a large and affectionate family.

Perhaps a dear, kind partner, who was the ornament and support of the household,—a virtuous and promising son,—a lovely and dutiful daughter,—is torn from our affections, and hidden in the grave—What a void is made in the family!—what a wound is inflicted on the heart!—It is a wound which no human physician can heal. Perhaps by *successive* strokes, our earthly comforts are reft away, till all the friends of our youth are gone,—our early attachments are dissolved,—and we sojourn like strangers

on a foreign shore, among a new race of beings, with whom we have no kindred feelings,—no attachments,—no common interest.

Life's best joys, seem to be extinct.—Like weary travellers, we long for repose,—and we would prefer as our highest boon, to lie down in the dust of death,—till the last trump shall summon ourselves, and our dear departed friends, from the slumbers of the tomb, to the tribunal of heaven.

Under such severe afflictions, the hopes, and promises of the gospel, are the only sources of real consolation. While persons who have never enjoyed these hopes, or rested on these promises, are encompassed by a dark cloud of horror, or despair;—the true christian is composed and cheerful. Even when the waves of affliction threaten to overwhelm him, he triumphs in the assured prospect of endless bliss.

"Godliness has the promise of the life that "now is." It has still another, and triumphant advantage to real christians—When every other sublunary joy is vanishing from his grasp,—when neither wisdom, nor wealth, nor honours, nor power,—can any longer yield comfort, or support;—when he stands on the verge of eternity,—even to that dread, dividing line,—religion attends the true disciple of the cross. What a contrast then exists between a libertine, and a devout believer!

The one looks back with sad regret on the past, reluctant and trembling, at leaving a world, to which he was *supremely* attached;—and awfully apprehensive of that unknown re-

gion to which he is hastening;—while the other, considering this world as a state of exile from his Father's house, longs for the moment when "this mortal shall put on immortality."

To the one, death is an enemy, who will always come too soon, come, when he may.—To the other, he is a welcome messenger, sent by his Lord to convey him to "a heavenly inheritance,"—to joys that human language is too feeble to describe, and which the human mind is too narrow to comprehend.

But "godliness has also promise of the life "to come." Its joys are not limited to the present life only,—they are commensurate with the being of the soul. Nothing is more expressly, or more certainly revealed, in the sacred Scriptures, than the perfect and unchangeable happiness, of the truly pious, in a future world.

"Blessed" says our Divine Master, "are "the pure in heart, for their's is the kingdom "of heaven." They are assured that they will in heaven be considered, as "children,—and "if children, then heirs,—heirs of God,—and "joint heirs of Christ;"—"heirs of salvation,"—"heirs of a kingdom which God "hath prepared for them that love him."—They will "rest from their labours, and their "works do follow them,"—"Mansions are "prepared for them in heaven."—Nay, more, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither "have entered into the heart of man,—the "things which God hath prepared for them "that love him." "Beyond the grave where

the hopes, and the works of sinners, shall for ever be consumed, the fruits of piety will only begin to ripen, and attain their complete perfection. The primitive beauties, and the innocent delights of paradise, shall be restored with boundless increase in that celestial Eden, into which Christ shall transplant his redeemed followers, when he shall create the universe anew."*

I remain as ever,
Very truly Your's.

LETTER XXX.

My Dear Friend—

But it is now time to bring these letters to a close. I have stated and answered, several of those objections, which are too apt to influence the minds of young and timid converts, when they are invited and urged to become partakers of the Lord's Supper. I have explained the nature and benefits of this ordinance—We have considered also, some of the obligations, under which all sincere believers in the revelation, lie,—to make an open profession of their faith, at the table of the Lord.—We have considered the duties to

* Dr. S. S. Smith.

be performed, prior to taking this important step,—the views that should be cherished, while partaking of this ordinance of love,—the renewed obligations, under which communicants are brought to live correspondently with the profession they have made; and the benefits and consolations which usually accompany a worthy participation of this holy Sacrament.

In bringing these letters to a conclusion, it will be useful briefly to consider, and state, some of the leading features of that dispensation of infinite mercy,—of which the Lord's Supper is the most distinguished memorial.

When the birth of our blessed Lord was first announced to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, the angel said to them, "fear "not, for behold I bring you good tidings of "great joy, which shall be to all people."—And how truly has the gospel verified this angelic declaration—It has brought "life and "immortality to light." When the Saviour appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, part of the instructions which he then gave to this intrepid apostle, whom he was about sending to the Gentiles, was, that he should "open "their eyes and turn them from darkness to "light." And the Evangelist Matthew, referring to a prophecy of Isaiah, in relation to our Lord says, "the people that sat in dark-"ness saw *a great light,* and to them which sat "in the shadow of death, *light* is sprung up."

Rightly to estimate the blessings of this light, we should contemplate the deep, deplorable darkness which rested on the whole earth, at

the commencement of our Saviour's ministry in Judea. Let us turn to the records of antiquity at this period, and what do we discover? We see the light even of natural religion almost extinct—The true God among all nations (the Jews excepted,) altogether unknown,—blind and abominable superstitions—a worship rendered to cruel, lascivious, and sanguinary deities;—altars erected to beasts and reptiles, and temples consecrated even to vice in various forms. Instead of acknowledging one God, Pagan theology spoke only of Fortune—of Destiny, and the Fates. It was conversant with omens, enchantments, and lots.—The laws of nature were despised—The most unbounded licentiousness of manners prevailed. The most disgusting vices were publicly practised. In a word universal profligacy reigned, and men seemed to emulate the brutes, in whatever was sensual and degrading; and demons, in the indulgence of cruel and ferocious passions.

This picture is not drawn from fancy. It is from facts stated by some of the most authentic authors of pagan antiquity. And how just the representation is, may be collected from that given by an inspired apostle, when writing to converts who, themselves, from their own observation or experience, could bear testimony to the truth of his statement.

Speaking of the Heathen world, in his Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul says, that "professing themselves to be wise, they "became fools, and changed the glory of the

"incorruptible God, into an image made like "to corruptible man, and to birds and four-"footed beasts and creeping things," "who "changed the truth of God, into a lie; and "worshipped the creature, more than the "Creator." Hence he continues, "God gave "them up to a reprobate mind, to do things "which are not convenient. Being filled "with all unrighteousness, fornication,—wick-"edness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of "envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity: "Whisperers, backbiters, boasters, inventors "of evil things—disobedient to parents, with-"out understanding—covenant-breakers— "without natural affection—implacable,—un-"merciful."—What a deplorable, yet how just a picture of the state of the world at the coming of our Lord!

It is true, the Jewish nation were not plunged in a darkness equally deep and degrading. They had a revelation from God. They had laws for their government, consonant with the clearest reason, and the purest morality, from this supreme Legislator.

They had prophets and judges, through successive periods, sent to instruct them in their duty, and to admonish them of their errors; and they had the book of the law,—the written statutes of Jehovah, as their monitor and guide. Still they were in a state of great darkness—often breaking the divine commandments, inclining to idolatry, and to all the vices of their heathen neighbours; and so little enlightened in regard to a future state

of existence, was the Jews, that the whole Mosaic œconomy has been viewed as a system of present rewards and punishments, having no reference to the retributions of eternity. Its threats and promises—its blessings and punishments, are all temporal. It delighted the senses with the exhibition of pompous ceremonies; and its stated ordinances, "profited little." It was only, to use the language of the apostle Peter, "a light that shineth in a dark place, until "the day dawn, and the day-star arise in "your hearts." (2 Pet. i. 19.)

At length however the Sun of Righteousness arose on a benighted world; to chase away the "gross darkness," that had settled on the nations. Truly did he say of himself, "I am the light of the world." At his appearance, what moral splendours broke on the human mind. He revealed a God, the Father of spirits; who claimed to be worshipped "in "Spirit and in Truth." He proclaimed the reign of Heaven on Earth—the restoration of sinful man, to a state of holiness. The King of Glory comes himself like a good shepherd to seek and to save poor helpless sheep, that had strayed from their Master's fold. He comes to publish grace, pardon, and peace. "The "great mystery of godliness—God manifested "in the flesh." The Lamb of God, by his own death expiates the sins of the world. He gives his life a ransom for the guilty—Heaven and Earth are reconciled. The immortality of the soul is clearly brought to light—the resurrection of the body—the final judgment, the pu-

nishments of hell, and the joys of heaven, are all unfolded and established by the clearest evidence, on the basis of immutable truth.

Such in a very few words is the *nature* of that gospel, which the Son of God came to publish—Its *excellence* consists in its tendency to enlighten the mind, to purify the heart, to regulate the affections, to give peace to the conscience, to prescribe just rules of action—to inspire cogent motives for the discharge of duty—to make us wiser, better, and happier in the present world, and at the same time to prepare us by the trials of life, for purer, and more permanent enjoyments in a future state of being.

The excellence of the gospel consists not only in its doctrines and its precepts, but in the recorded examples of wise and holy men,—and above all, in the finished example of the great Captain of our salvation, who was made "perfect through suffering,"—whose footsteps, we are instructed to follow, so far as the infirmity of our nature will admit.—It consists also in that assurance we have of the influences of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to discharge duties which by our own unassisted endeavours, we could never perform.

The last circumstance we shall mention in proof of the *excellence* of the gospel, is its tendency to console the human heart under the strokes of adversity, and at the termination of the present life.

The God of the gospel, is a God of compassion, and of love. He prefers mercy to sacri-

fice. "He is not willing that any one should "perish, but rather that sinners should return "unto him, and live." Let a heart that has been formed in the school of the gospel, be subjected to the trial of sickness,—of persecution,—adversity,—detraction, or loss of friends;—it will rise superior to all these sufferings, and be able to say with the apostle,—"Yea, doubtless I count all things but loss, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ "Jesus my Lord."

The Religion of Christ, is then the richest present that heaven could make to man—It is benignant in all its aspects. It enlightens the mind; it purifies the affections and desires,—and calms the irregular passions. It promotes our health,—our reputation,—our temporal interests,—our present peace, and our eternal welfare.—It seals the pardon of our sin, and opens the gates of everlasting happiness, to the believing and penitent soul.

And now my friend, in the review of this whole subject, what are the conclusions we ought to draw.—That to know God,—to believe in his Son, our Lord,—to do what *he* has commanded,—to hope and trust in him, and follow his example;—these are at once our duty, our privilege, and our recompence. And how many motives unite to confirm our allegiance to our heavenly Sovereign. The horrors of sin,—the vanity of the world,—the emptiness of pleasure,—the disgrace,—the weight, and pain of that yoke, which the world imposes on its votaries.—And on the other

hand, the loveliness,—the pleasures, and advantages of true piety.—"The peace of God, "which passeth all understanding,"—the harmony of our affections,—the repose of conscience,—the consolations of grace,—the delightful prospects beyond the grave,—the promise of endless glory,—the opening gates of heaven,—the splendours of the new Jerusalem,—its treasures, and its joys;—the everlasting presence of God himself,—the society of angels,—and a re-union with those friends whom on earth we have loved most dearly.

Are not these, motives that should animate our devotion, increase our faith, and make us willing, at any moment, "to depart, and be "with Christ, which is far better."

Were the christian religion nothing but the child of human invention; still, its doctrines and its hopes are so rational and consoling, that they would be incomparably preferable to every system which Infidelity ever conceived, or human ingenuity devised.

Were christianity but a waking *dream*,—it is so pleasing a dream, that reasonable beings, would prefer indulging it, infinitely rather than to embracing the "sober certainty" of annihilation.

We should say with the first of Roman Orators, "Yes, if I am deceived in believing my soul to be immortal, I am agreeably deceived, and while I live, I wish no one to deprive me of an error, which now constitutes my chief happiness."

Were our faith always in lively exercise,

how precious would the gospel appear, contrasted with all that this world could bestow. Is there any comparison between the two as the portion of the soul? On the one hand, heaven and immortality; on the other, the world and destruction.—On the one hand, pleasure without end,—happiness beyond our present comprehension.—On the other, the extinction of being, and of hope, in the grave—On the one hand, God in all his majesty, his glory, and his grace—On the other, exclusion from his presence, "the blackness of darkness for ever;" and confinement in that prison of despair,—"Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is "not quenched."

Whenever then, my christian friend, you are summoned to the table of the Lord, endeavour to forget your cares, your trials, and your sorrows;—think rather on the short duration of the present life,—think of the grace which sustains your infirmities,—of the pardon of your sins, through the atoning death of Christ,—of the immense weight of glory that will be revealed in you hereafter,—of the crown of glory,—of the sceptre of righteousness,—and the kingdom you will inherit, in virtue of the promise, and through the infinite merits of the Son of God.

Saviour of the world!—Author and Finisher of our faith!—Behold us in mercy—Impart to us thy grace, and when we meet around thy table, to commemorate thy death,—"let us "feel the blessed assurance that our sins are "forgiven."

Send down THE COMFORTER into our hearts. Break every tie that binds us too strongly to the world. Triumph over every obstacle which opposes thy reign in our hearts.—Subdue our reluctant wills,—warm our cold hearts;—say to us, respectively, "thy soul is mine,—it is the purchase of my blood,—I will cleanse it,—I will save it."

And may "the God of peace that brought "again from the dead, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, "that great Shepherd of the sheep,—through "the blood of the everlasting covenant; make "us perfect in every good work, to do his "will; working in us, that which is well "pleasing in his sight." "Blessing, and "glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and "honour, and power, and might, be unto our "God for ever and ever, Amen."

SACRAMENTAL HYMNS,

SELECTED AND ORIGINAL.

I. Preparatory to the Communion.
II. At the Table of the Lord.
III. After Communion.

HYMN I.

Welcome to the Table of the Lord.—Cowper.

1 THIS is the feast of heavenly wine
And God invites to sup,
The juices of the living vine
Were press'd to fill the cup.

2 Oh bless the Saviour ye that eat;
With royal dainties fed,
Not heav'n affords a costlier treat;
For JESUS is the *bread.*

3 The vile—the lost, he calls to them,
Ye trembling souls appear;
The righteous in their *own esteem*
Have no acceptance here.

4 Approach ye poor; nor dare refuse;
The banquet's spread for *you:*
Dear Saviour! this is welcome news,
Then *I* may venture too.

5 If *guilt* and *sin* afford a plea,
And may obtain a place,
Surely the Lord will welcome *me,*
And *I* shall see his face.

HYMN II.

On the first approach to the Lord's Table.——Davies.

1 LORD I am thine, entirely thine,
Purchas'd and sav'd by blood Divine;
With full consent, thine would I be,
And own thy Sov'reign right in me.

2 Here Lord, my flesh, my soul, my all,
I yield to thee beyond recall;
Accept thine own, so long withheld,
Accept what I so freely yield.

3 Grant one poor sinner more a place
Among the children of thy grace;
A wretched sinner lost to God,
But ransom'd by Immanuel's blood.

4 Thine would I live—*thine* would I die,
Be thine thro' all eternity;
The vow is past beyond repeal,
Now will I set the solemn seal.

5 Be thou the witness of my vow,
Angels and men attest it too;
That to thy board I now repair,
And seal the sacred contract there.

6 Here at thy cross where flows the blood
That bought my guilty soul for God;
Thee my new Master, now I call,
And consecrate to thee my all.

7 Do thou assist a feeble worm
The great engagement to perform;
Thy grace can full assistance lend,
And on that grace I dare depend.

HYMN III.

An Invitation to Believers.——Fellows.

1 SUBJECTS of a celestial King,
Ye who delight his praise to sing;
Who in his earthly temple dwell
And of his spreading glory tell.

2 Call to the converts at your gate
Why should they longer ling'ring wait?
Why should they longer fear or doubt?
Why should they longer stay without?

3 Gently reprove them for delay,
In softest language chide their stay;
Strive with your songs their hearts to win,
Ye blessed of the Lord! come in.

4 Come in, redeemed of the Lord,
Ye that obey and trust his word,
Come and partake his heavenly bread,
The food with which his saints are fed.

5 Your Saviour's goodness, haste to prove,
And feast on his redeeming love;
Come all ye happy souls that thirst,
The last is welcome as the first.

6 Come to his table, and receive
The grace, a pard'ning God can give,
His love through every age endures,
This promise, and himself are yours.

HYMN IV.

Let a man Examine himself, and so let him eat.—Cor. xi.

1 WHAT strange perplexities arise,
What anxious fears and jealousies;
What crowds in doubtful light appear,
How few alas! approv'd and clear.

2 And what am I? my soul awake,
And an impartial survey take;
Does no dark sign, no ground of fear
In practice, or in heart appear?

3 What image does my spirit bear?
Is Jesus form'd, or living there?
Say do his lineaments divine
In thought, and word, and action shine?

4 Searcher of hearts! Oh search me still,
The secrets of my soul reveal;
My fears remove, let me appear
To God, and my own conscience clear.

5 May I consistent with thy word
Approach thy table, dearest Lord,
May I among thy saints appear,
Shall I, a welcome guest, be there?

6 Have I a wedding garment on,
Or do I naked, stand alone?
Oh! quicken, clothe, and feed my soul,
Forgive my sins, and make me whole.

HYMN V.

And yet there is room.—Luke xiv. 22.—Steele.

1 YE wretched hungry, starving poor,
Behold a royal feast,
While mercy spreads her bounteous store
For every humble guest.

2 See JESUS stands with open arms,
He calls, he bids you come;
Guilt holds you back, and fear alarms,
But see there is yet room.

3 Room in the Saviour's bleeding heart
There love and pity meet,
Nor will he bid the soul depart
That trembles at his feet.

4 In him the FATHER reconcil'd
Invites your souls to come,
The rebel shall be call'd a child
And kindly welcom'd home.

5 Oh come, and with his children taste
The blessings of his love,
While hope attends the sweet repast
Of nobler joys above.

6 There with united heart and voice
Ten thousand souls may come,
Come,—in a Saviour's grace rejoice,
Approach, there yet is room.

HYMN VI.

Compel them to come in.—Luke xiv. 23.——Beck's Col.

1 LORD how large thy bounties are,
Tender, gracious sinners' friend;
What a feast dost thou prepare,
What kind invitations send!

2 Now fulfil thy great design,
Who didst first the message bring;
Hesitating souls incline,
Now "compel them to come in."

3 Rushing on the downward road,
Sinners no compulsion need;
Spurning happiness and God,
See they run with fatal speed.

4 Draw them back by love divine,
Check them in their course of sin;
Wand'ring souls to thee incline,
Lord! "compel them to come in."

5 Doubting, trembling hearts compel,
By thy matchless love constrain:
Draw them from the ways of hell,
Bring them home to *thee* again.

6 Say with energy divine
Sinner, I forgive thy sin;
Stubborn foes to thee incline,
Lord! "compel them to come in."

HYMN VII.

All things are ready.—Luke xiv. 22.——Doddridge.

1 THE King of heav'n, his table spreads
And dainties crown the board,
Not paradise with all its joys
Such pleasure could afford.

2 Pardon and peace, to dying man
And endless life are given,
Thro' the rich blood that JESUS shed,
To raise the soul to heav'n.

3 Ye hungry poor, that long have stray'd
In sins dark mazes, come;
Come from your most secure retreats,
And grace shall find you room.

4 Millions of souls in glory now
Were fed and feasted here;
And millions more still on their way,
Around the board appear.

5 Yet is his house and heart so large
That millions more may come;
Nor could the whole assembled world,
O'erfill the spacious room.

6 "All things are ready," come away,
Nor weak excuses frame;
Crowd to your places at the feast,
And bless the Founder's name.

HYMN VIII.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Matthew xi. 28.

1 HARK, what sounds are these, so pleasing,
Sinners wipe the falling tear;
Love divine, and never ceasing
Speaks, let every sinner hear.

2 "Come to me all ye that labour,
Heavy laden sinners, come;"
None more welcome to the Saviour
Than the wretched and undone.

3 Hear the kind Redeemer press you,
Cease to heave the plaintive sigh,
Let not guilt or fear depress you,
Come, and ye shall never die.

4 Come with contrite hearts, and wonder
How such mercy you withstood;
Parch'd with thirst, and starv'd with hunger,
Fill your souls with heav'nly food.

5 If by sin, and sore temptation
You're heavy laden, and oppress'd;

Hear the Saviour's invitation;
"Come, and I will give you rest."

6 Let not guilty hesitation
Keep you from a heav'nly feast,
Meet the gracious invitation
Come, and Christ will give you rest.

HYMN IX.

Invitations of the Gospel.—Isaiah lv. 1.—Watts.

1 LET ev'ry mortal ear attend
And ev'ry heart rejoice,
The trumpet of the gospel sounds
With an inviting voice.

2 Ho! all ye hungry, starving souls,
That feed upon the wind,
And vainly strive with earthly food
To fill an empty mind.—

3 Eternal wisdom has prepar'd
A soul reviving feast,
And bids your longing appetites
The rich provision taste.

4 Ho! ye that pant for living streams,
And pine away, and die;
Here you may quench your raging thirst
With springs that never dry.

5 Rivers of love, and mercy here
In a rich ocean join,
Salvation in abundance flows
Like floods of milk and wine.

6 Dear Lord! the treasures of thy love
Are everlasting mines,
Deep as our helpless mis'ries are,
And boundless as our sins.

HYMN X.

And all that believed were together, and had all things in common.—Acts ii. 44.——Dobell.

1 HOW pleasing is the sight to see,
Each sect and party so agree;
As to sit round the Saviour's board,
As members of one common Lord.

2 Here we behold the dawn of bliss,
Here we behold the Saviour's grace;
Here we behold his precious blood,
Which intercedes for us with God.

3 Hear Lord our pray'r, while we implore,
That love may spread from shore to shore;
Till all thy saints like us combine,
To praise the Lamb in songs divine.

4 To ev'ry saint in ev'ry land,
Who loves the Lord—we give the hand;
For all are one in Christ the head,
To whom be endless honours paid.

5 Here by the bread and wine we view,
What deep perdition was our due;
But through th' atonement of our Lord,
More than was lost has been restor'd.

6 Let party names, those seeds of hell,
No more in christian bosoms dwell!
But love and union in his blood,
Prove them the chosen heirs of God.

HYMN XI.

The good Resolve.——Original.

1 AH! why do I hesitate—wherefore delay
To give myself wholly to JESUS away;
Ah! why for a moment from *him*, would I rove
When my heart and my treasure, and hopes are above?

2 How uncertain is life! and how fading is health!
How transient are pleasures, and honours and wealth;
Then why such possessions as *these* should I prize,
And the solid delights of religion, despise.

3 'Tis done—from this moment my soul I resign,
And resolve blessed JESUS to be *wholly* thine;
Discarding the world, with its treacherous charms,
I haste—Dear Redeemer—I haste to thine arms.

4 Didst thou suffer and die for offenders like me?
And shall *I* still continue a stranger to thee?
Ah! no—I'm resolved—I'll no longer delay
But give myself *wholly* to JESUS away.

PART II.

FOR BELIEVERS WHILE AROUND THE COMMUNION TABLE.

HYMN XII.

The Gospel feast.—Stennett.

1 LORD! at thy table I behold
The wonders of thy grace;
But most of all, admire, that I
Should find a welcome place.

2 I, that am all defil'd with sin,
A rebel to my God
I, that have crucify'd his Son,
And trampled on his blood.

3 What strange—surprising grace is this
That such a soul has room,
My Saviour takes me by the hand,
My Jesus bids me come.

4 "Eat, Oh my friends," the Saviour cries,
"The feast was made for you,
For you I groan'd and bled and dy'd,
And rose, and triumph'd too."

5 With humble faith and thankful hearts,
Lord we accept thy love;
'Tis a rich banquet we have had,
What will it be above?

6 Had I ten thousand hearts, dear Lord
I'd give them all to thee;
Had I ten thousand tongues, they all
Should join the harmony.

HYMN XIII.

Christ our Sacrifice.—Watts.

1 THE wonders Lord, thy love has wrought,
Exceed our praise—surmount our thought;
Should I attempt the long detail,
My speech would faint, my members fail.

2 No blood of beasts on altars spilt,
Can cleanse the souls of men from guilt;
But thou hast set before our eyes,
An all-sufficient sacrifice.

3 In Heav'n before his Father's throne,
Complacent smiles th' Eternal Son,
And pleas'd presents with boundless grace,
Himself a ransom for our race.

4 "Behold I come," the Saviour cries,
With love and duty in his eyes;
"I come to bear the heavy load,
"Of sins—and do thy will my God.

5 "Mine ear is open'd to thy voice,
"My heart delighted with thy choice,
"Pleas'd, I assume a human form,
"A kin to man—that dying worm.

6 "'Tis written in thy great decree,
"'Tis in thy book foretold of me;
"I must fulfil a Saviour's part.
"And lo! thy law is in my heart.

7 "I'll magnify thy Holy law,
"And rebels to obedience draw;
"When on thy cross I'm lifted high,
"Or to my crown above the sky.

8 "The Spirit shall descend and show,
"What *thou* hast done, and what *I* do;
"The wond'ring world shall learn thy grace,
"Thy wisdom and thy righteousness."

HYMN XIV.

The Lord's Supper Instituted.—1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.——Watts.

1 'TWAS on that dark and doleful night,
When pow'rs of earth and hell arose,
Against the Son of God's delight,
And friends betray'd him to his foes.

2 Before the mournful scene began,
He took the bread—and bless'd—and brake;
What love through all his actions ran,
What wondrous words of grace he spake.

3 "This is my body, broke for sin,
"Receive and eat the living food;"
Then took the cup, and bless'd the wine,
"'Tis the new cov'nant in my blood."

4 For us his flesh with nails was torn,
He bore the scourge, he felt the thorn;
And justice pour'd upon *his* head,
Its heavy vengeance, in *our* stead.

5 "Do this," he cry'd till time shall end,
"In mem'ry of your dying friend;
"Meet at my table, and record
"The love of your departed Lord."

6 Jesus! thy feast we celebrate,
We show thy death, we sing thy name,
Till thou return, and we shall eat
The marriage, supper of the Lamb.

HYMN XV.

The Lord's Supper is "meat and drink indeed."—John vi. 55.——Cole.

1 GREAT God! we now surround thy board,
To banquet and to feed;
Thy flesh and blood, dear dying Lord,
Are "meat and drink indeed."

2 Thy sacred flesh, and saving blood,
Do ev'ry type exceed,
And can we say this heav'nly food,
Is "meat and drink indeed?"

3 The paschal supper serv'd to show,
How Jacob's tribes were freed;
And in a figure, pointed to
This "meat and drink indeed."

4 The manna, and the cheering stream,
For Israel's daily need,
Did in the wilderness proclaim
This "meat and drink indeed."

5 This is the Lord's appointed feast,
Enjoin'd on all his seed,
His flesh and blood—Oh! happy guest,
Are "meat and drink indeed."

6 These sacred signs, assist our sense,
But faith on Christ can feed,
He is the bread of excellence;
And "meat, and drink indeed."

HYMN XVI.

Christ the food of the Soul.—Stennett.

1 HERE at thy table Lord we meet,
To feed on food divine;
Thy *body*, is the *bread* we eat,
Thy precious *blood*, the wine.

2 He that prepares the rich repast,
Himself comes down and dies;
And then invites us thus to feast,
Upon the Sacrifice.

3 Here peace and pardon sweetly flow,
Oh! what delightful food,
We eat the bread, and drink the wine,
But think on nobler good.

4 The agonies which he endur'd,
Upon th' accursed tree;
For me each welcome guest may say,
"'Twas all procur'd for me."

5 Sure there was never love so free,
Dear Saviour so divine;
Well thou may'st claim that heart of me,
Which owes so much to thine.

HYMN XVII.

Christ the Fountain of Life.—John xix. 31.—Cowper.

1 THERE is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plung'd beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

2 The dying thief rejoic'd to see,
The fountain in his day;
And whence have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

3 Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood,
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransom'd church of God,
Be sav'd to sin no more.

4 Since I by faith, beheld the stream,
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be, till I die.

5 Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy pow'r to save,
When this poor lisping, fault'ring tongue,
Lies silent in the grave.

6 Lord I believe thou hast prepar'd,
Unworthy tho' I be;
For me a blood-bought, free reward,
A golden harp for me.

HYMN XVIII.

Do this in Remembrance of me.—Luke xxii. 19.—Original.

1 HERE, in obedience to thy word,
We meet around thy table Lord!
The pledges of thy love we see,
And hear thee say "Remember me."

2 "Remember thee!" thou bleeding Lamb!
Who from the Father's bosom came,
From guilt and pain, to set us free;
And give the captive liberty.

3 "Remember thee," Incarnate God,
Yes, till we sleep beneath the sod!
Thy love, thy mercy, and thy pow'r,
We'll oft remember, and adore.

4 "Remember thee"!—Ah, who so base,
As to forget thy pard'ning grace;
Thy tears, thy poverty and woe,
Thy death, and resurrection too.

5 "Remember thee!"—Oh yes! till death
Shall close those eyes, and stop this breath;
Yes I'll remember and record,
The grace of my ascended Lord.

6 And when releas'd from death's embrace,
May I behold thee, "face to face,"
And in thy blissful presence prove,
The transports of celestial love.

HYMN XIX.

I am not ashamed of Christ.—Watts.

1 AT thy command our dearest Lord,
Here we attend thy dying feast;
Thy blood, like wine adorns the board,
And thine own flesh feeds ev'ry guest.

2 Our faith adores thy bleeding love,
And trusts for life, in one that dy'd;
We hope for heav'nly crowns above,
From a Redeemer crucify'd.

3 Let the vain world pronounce its shame,
And fling its scandals on the cause;
We come to boast our Saviour's name,
And make our triumphs in his cross.

4 With joy we tell the scoffing age,
He that was dead, has left the tomb,
He lives above their utmost rage;
And we are waiting till he come.

HYMN XX.

The promised Saviour.—Isaiah iii. 1, 2, 3.——Watts, altered.

1 IS it my dear, Incarnate God!
I see descending from the skies,
Array'd in garments, steep'd in blood,
With joy and pity in his eyes?

2 The Lord, the Saviour! yes 'tis he;
I know him by the smiles he wears;
Dear Lamb of God, that dy'd for me,
Drench'd deep in agonies and tears.

3 Lo! he reveals his shining breast,
I own those wounds, and I adore.
Lo, he prepares a royal feast,
Sweet fruit of all the pangs he bore.

4 Whence flow these favours so divine?
Lord! why so lavish of thy blood?
Why, for such earthly souls as mine,
This heav'nly flesh, this sacred food?

5 'Twas his own love that made him bleed,
That nail'd him to the cursed tree;
'Twas his own love, this table spread
For such unworthy worms as we.

6 Thus let me taste the Saviour's love;
Come faith, and feed upon the Lord;
With glad consent our lips shall move,
And sweet Hosannah's crown the board.

HYMN XXI.

Christ our great High-Priest.—Heb. iii. 14, &c.——Logan.

1 WHERE high the heav'nly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands;
A great HIGH-PRIEST, our nature wears,
The guardian of mankind appears.

2 He, who for men their surety stood,
And pour'd on earth his precious blood;
Pursues in heav'n his mighty plan,
The Saviour, and the friend of man.

3 Tho' now in heaven, ascended high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

4 Our fellow suff'rer yet retains
A fellow feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies,
His bloody sweat, his tears and cries.

5 In ev'ry pang that rends the heart,
The man of sorrows had a part;
He sympathizes with our grief,
And sends the sin-sick soul relief.

6 With boldness therefore at his throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known;
And ask the aid of heav'nly pow'r,
To help us in the evil hour.

HYMN XXII.

Faith, Hope, and Love.

1 THE blest memorials of thy love,
Of thine atoning death;
We come dear Saviour! to receive,
But would receive with—*faith.*

2 The tokens sent us to relieve,
Our spirits when they droop;
We come dear Saviour to receive,
But would receive with—*hope*

3 The pledges thou wast pleas'd to leave,
Our sorrows to remove;
We come dear Saviour to receive,
But would receive with—*love.*

4 Here, in obedience to thy word,
We take the bread and wine;
The utmost we can do, dear Lord!
For all beyond is thine.

5 Increase our *faith*, and *hope*, and *love*,
Lord! give us all that 's good;
We would thy full salvation prove,
And share thy *flesh and blood.*

HYMN XXIII.

Meditations at the Lord's Table.——Original.

1 IS it not goodness undeserv'd?
Is it not rich, unbounded grace,
That sinners such as we, are spar'd,
And at this table find a place?

2 That we can hold communion sweet,
With fellow christians at *this* board?
In peace and fellowship can meet,
To celebrate our dying Lord?

3 Oh what a source of sacred bliss,
Thus with the Son of God to sup!
What a high privilege is this
His bread to eat, and drink his cup!

4 While millions of our wretched race
In darkness and delusion lie,
At thine own table, Lord! *we* trace
Thine infinite benignity.

5 And while partaking of *this* feast,
Hope points to that repast on high
Where with our Saviour's presence blest,
Our *love* shall live, when *faith* shall die.

HYMN XXIV.

Christ's Sufferings, and the sinner's Salvation.—Psalm lxix.——Watts.

1 DEEP in our hearts let us record
The deeper sorrows of the Lord;
Behold the rising billows roll,
To overwhelm his holy soul.

2 In long complaints he spends his breath,
While hosts of hell, and powers of death,
And all the sons of malice join,
To execute their curst design.

3 Yet gracious God, thy pow'r and love,
Has made the curse a blessing prove;
Those dreadful sufferings of thy Son,
Aton'd for sins, which we had done.

4 The pangs of our expiring Lord,
The honours of thy law restor'd;
His sorrows made thy justice known,
And paid for follies not his own.

5 Oh for *his* sake our guilt forgive,
And let the mourning rebel live;
The Lord will hear us in his name,
Nor shall our hope be turn'd to shame.

HYMN XXV.

The dying Love of Christ.—2 Cor. v. 14, 15.——Steele.

1 SEE Lord! thy willing subjects bow,
Adoring low before thy throne;
Accept our humble, cheerful vow,
Thou art our Sov'reign, thou alone.

2 Beneath thy soul-reviving ray
E'en cold affliction's wintry gloom,
Shall brighten into vernal day,
And hopes and joys immortal bloom.

3 Smile on our souls and bid us sing
In concert with the choir above;
The glories of our Saviour—King,
The condescension of his love.

4 He dy'd, to raise to life and joy,
The vile,—the guilty, and undone;
Oh let his praise each hour beguile,
Till hours no more their circles run.

5 He dy'd,—ye seraphs tune your songs,
Resound the Saviour's sacred name;
For nought below immortal tongues,
Can ever reach the wondrous theme.

HYMN XXVI.

Jesus hastening to Suffer.——Cowper.

1 THE Saviour!—what a noble flame
Was kindled in his breast,

When hast'ning to Jerusalem,
He march'd before the rest.

2 Good will to men, and zeal for God,
His ev'ry thought engross;
He longs to be baptiz'd with blood;
He pants to reach his cross.

3 With all his suff'rings full in view,
And woes to us unknown;
Forth to the task, his spirit flew,
'Twas love that urg'd him on.

4 Lord! we return thee what we can,
Our hearts shall sound abroad,
Salvation to the dying man,
And glory to our God.

5 And while thy blood and suff'rings here,
Engage our wond'ring eyes,
We learn our lighter cross to bear,
And hasten to the skies.

HYMN XXVII.

Faith in Christ our Sacrifice.——Watts.

1 NOT all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

2 But CHRIST the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

3 My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine;
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

4 My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
While hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes *her* guilt was there.

5 Believing, we rejoice,
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing his bleeding love.

HYMN XXVIII.

My Soul thirsteth for CHRIST.——Cowper.

1 I THIRST, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds Emmanuel!—all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures here.

2 It was the sight of thy dear cross,
First wean'd my soul from earthly things,
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools, and pomp of kings.

3 I want that grace that springs from thee,
That quickens all things where it flows;
And makes a wretched thorn like me,
Bloom like the myrtle, or the rose.

4 Dear fountain of delight unknown,
No longer sink below the brim,
But overflow, and pour me down,
A living and life-giving stream.

5 For sure of all the plants that share,
The notice of thy Father's eye;
None proves less grateful to his care,
Or yields him meaner fruit, than I.

HYMN XXIX.

The Paschal Lamb.—Heb. ix. 12.——Braithwaite.

1 PASCHAL Lamb!—by God appointed,
All our sins on thee were laid,
By almighty love anointed,
Thou hast full atonement made.

2 All thy people are forgiven
Through the virtue of thy blood;

Open'd is the gate of heav'n,
Peace is made 'twixt man and God.

3 Jesus hail! enthron'd in glory,
There for ever to abide;
All the heav'nly hosts adore thee,
Seated at thy Father's side.

4 There, for sinners thou art pleading,
There, thou dost our place prepare;
Ever for us interceding.
Till in glory we appear.

5 Glory, honour, pow'r, and blessing,
Thou art worthy to receive;
Loudest praises without ceasing,
Ransom'd sinner's freely give.

6 When we join th' angelic spirits,
In their most exalted praise;
Then we'll sing our Saviour's merits,
In melodious, heav'nly lays.

HYMN XXX.

For we are members one of another.—Eph. iv. 25.——Original.

1 HERE blessed Saviour! while I sit
Communing with thy chosen few,
Prostrate,—adoring at thy feet,
Again my cov'nant I renew.

2 Once, thou wast present at a feast,
And chang'd the water into wine;
Now deign with *us* to be a guest,
And make our present joys, divine.

3 Shed on our hearts celestial peace,
Fan our affections to a flame;
Our minds from earthly cares release,
And make our love to thee, supreme.

4 Pour, dearest Lord, thy Spirit too,
On *absent friends, and kindred dear;*
Who do not yet, a Saviour know,
Who do not at thy board appear.

5 Oh change their hearts, and bring them in,
Draw them with energy divine;
Shew them their misery and sin,
Subdue their wills, and make them thine.

6 So shall our souls unite to bless,
The Source, and Object of our faith;
Nor will we close our song of praise,
Until our lips are seal'd in death.

HYMN XXXI.

The Gospel Feast.—Luke xvi. 16.——Watts.

1 HOW rich are thy provisions, Lord!
Thy table furnish'd from above;
The fruits of life o'erspread the board,
The cup o'erflows with heav'nly love.

2 We are the poor, the blind, the lame,
And help was far,—and death was nigh;
But at the gospel call we came,
And ev'ry want receiv'd supply.

3 From the highway that leads to hell,
From paths of darkness and despair,—
Lord we are come, with thee to dwell,
Glad to enjoy thy presence here.

4 What shall we pay th' Eternal Son,
Who left the heav'n of his abode,
And to this wretched earth came down
To bring us wand'rers back to God.

5 It cost *him* death, to save *our* lives,
To buy *our* souls, it cost his own;
And all the unknown joys he gives,
Were bought with agonies unknown.

HYMN XXXII.

The Helpless Sinner.—Luke xiv. 22.——Hart.

1 PITY a helpless sinner Lord,
Who would believe thy precious word;

But own my heart with shame and grief,
A sink of sin and unbelief.

2 Lord! in thy house I hear there's room,
And doubting—trembling—see I come;
But can—Oh tell me, can there be,
Among thy children, room for me.

3 I eat the bread—I drink the wine,
But oh! my soul wants more than *sign*;
I faint unless I feed on thee,
And drink thy blood, as shed for me.

4 For sinners Lord—thou cam'st to bleed,
And I'm a sinner, vile indeed;
Lord I believe thy grace is free,
Oh magnify that grace in me.

HYMN XXXIII.

Jesus—the gift of God.—John iii. 16.——Beddome.

1 JESUS! my love, my chief delight,
For thee I long—for thee I pray,
Amid the shadows of the night;
Amid the business of the day.

2 When shall I see thy smiling face,
That face which I have often seen;
Arise thou Sun of righteousness,
Scatter the clouds that intervene.

3 Thou art the glorious gift of God,
To sinners weary and distrest;
The first of all his gifts bestow'd,
And certain pledge of all the rest.

4 Could I but say this gift was mine,
I'd tread the world beneath my feet;
No more at poverty repine,
Nor envy the rich sinner's state.

5 The precious jewel I would keep,
And lodge it deep within my heart;
At home, abroad, awake, asleep,
It never should from thence depart,

HYMN XXXIV.

Jesus the Life of the Soul.—John xiv. 10.——Steele.

1 WHEN sins and fears prevailing rise,
And fainting hope almost expires;
Jesus! to thee I lift mine eyes,
To thee I breathe my soul's desires.

2 Art thou not mine, my living Lord?
And can my hope, my comfort die?
Fix'd on thine everlasting word,
That word which built the earth and sky.

3 If my immortal Saviour lives,
Then my immortal life is sure;
His word a firm foundation gives,
Here let me build and rest secure.

4 Here let my faith unshaken dwell,
Immoveable the promise stands;
Nor all the pow'rs of earth or hell,
Can e'er dissolve the sacred bands.

4 Here, Oh my soul thy trust repose,
If Jesus is forever thine;
Nor death itself, that last of foes,
Shall break a union so divine.

PART III.

HYMNS ADAPTED TO COMMUNICANTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY PARTAKEN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

HYMN XXXV.

The Song of Simeon—Or a sight of Christ makes death easy.—Luke ii. 28.——Watts.

1 NOW have our hearts embrac'd our God,
We would forget all earthly charms;

And wish to die as Simeon would,
With his young Saviour in his arms.

2 Our lips should learn that joyful song,
Were but our hearts prepar'd like his;
Our souls still willing to be gone,
And at his word, depart in peace.

3 Here we have seen thy face, Oh Lord,
And view'd salvation with our eyes,
Tasted and felt the living word,
The bread descending from the skies.

4 Thou hast prepar'd this dying lamb,
Hast set his blood before our face;
To teach the terrors of thy name,
And shew the wonders of thy grace.

5 He is our light.—Our morning star,
Shall shine on nations yet unknown;
The glory of thine Israel here,
And joy of spirits near thy throne.

HYMN XXXVI.

Christ Crucified.—Steele.

1 STRETCH'D on a cross, the Saviour dies,
Hark—his expiring groans arise;
See from his hands, his feet, his side,
Runs down the sacred, crimson tide.

2 Believers now behold the man,
The man of grief, condemn'd for you;
The Lamb of God, for sinners slain,
Weeping—to Calvary pursue.

3 His sacred limbs they pierce,—they tear,
With nails they fasten to the wood,
His sacred limbs expos'd and bare,
Are only cover'd with his blood.

4 See here his temples crown'd with thorns,
His bleeding hands extended wide,
His streaming feet transfix'd and torn,
The fountain gushing from his side.

5 Dear suff'ring, dying, Son of God,
How doth thy heart to sinners move;

Sprinkle on us thy precious blood,
Constrain us with a Saviour's love.

HYMN XXXVII.

The Sacramental repast ended.—Original.

1 THE feast is o'er—the joy is past,
A joy too thrilling, long to last;
A feast on heav'nly flesh and blood,
An hour of converse with our God.

2 While meeting round our Saviour's board,
Our souls on angel-wings have soar'd,
And borne to heav'n. have seen his face,
Radiant with glory, and with grace.

3 Another sacramental feast,
Our senses, and our souls has bless'd;
But if *another* we shall see,
Is known Great God! alone to thee.

4 And should this sacred solemn feast,
To me—Dear Saviour, be the last,
May faith and hope, with all their pow'r,
Sustain me in a dying hour.

5 When passing thro' death's awful shade,
May no dismay my soul invade,
From doubt and dread, thy grace can save,
And cheer the darkness of the grave.

6 There, will my relics sleep in hope,
Till the last trump shall wake them up;
Then in his own bless'd likeness rise,
To meet my Saviour in the skies.

HYMN XXXVIII.

The Lord's Supper, a source of real Consolation.—Original.

1 AWAY with ev'ry anxious care,
With doubt, with sadness, and despair.
From sharing in a heavenly feast,
Our souls have truly been refresh'd.

2 Around our Master's table met,
We have enjoy'd communion sweet,
Tasted our dear Redeemer's love,
Like Manna, fresh from realms above.

3 Invited on his flesh to feed,
That sacred flesh was "meat indeed;"
His blood for us on Calv'ry spilt,
Can cleanse from deepest stains of guilt.

4 Thro' all the remnant of our days,
This feast shall teach our lips to praise;
This dear memorial of our Lord,
Sweet consolation will afford.

5 Beneath afflictions darkest hour,
When clouds collect, and tempests low'r;
Our faith will cast a steady eye,
On cheering, blood-stain'd Calvary.

6 This sweet communion-feast will shed
Solace, around a dying bed;
Until the soul is call'd above,
To a rich feast of endless love.

HYMN XXXIX.

The Lord's Supper a memorial of Christ's death.—1 Cor. xi. 26.——Original.

1 NO—never may our souls forget,
Th' injunction of our dying Lord,
To meet as we have often met,
Around the sacramental board.

2 There have our faith, and, hope and love,
Partaken of angelic food;
The *Bread* descending from above,
And *wine*,—the type of Jesus's blood.

3 In mem'ry of that dying Lamb,
Who paid for man, salvation's price,
Who was at once the great "I AM,"
Th' atoning PRIEST,—and SACRIFICE.

4 Thy *death*—Dear Lord, we celebrate,
While round thy table met again.
Thy graces would we imitate,
While on thy footstool we remain.

5 Yes, and while thought, and life shall last,
Till time and nature's final doom;
Thy friends will share this sweet repast,
Until their Lord again "shall come."

6 Till God the Saviour from on high,
Amidst angelic hosts *shall come*,
To seal the world's last destiny,
And take his true disciples home.

HYMN XL.

The Remembrance of our absent Lord.—Luke xxii. 19.——Watts.

1 JESUS is gone above the skies,
Where our weak senses reach him not;
And carnal objects court our eyes,
To thrust our Saviour from our thought.

2 He knows what wand'ring hearts we have,
Apt to forget his lovely face,
And to refresh our minds he gave
These kind memorials of his grace.

3 The Lord of life, this table spread
With his own flesh, and dying blood;
We, on the rich provision feed,
And taste the wine, and bless the God.

4 Let sinful sweets be all forgot,
And earth grow less in our esteem;
Christ, and his love, fill ev'ry thought,
And faith, and hope, be fix'd on him.

5 While he is absent from our sight,
'Tis to prepare our souls a place,
That we might dwell in heav'nly light,
And live for ever near his face.

6 Our eyes look upward to the hills
Whence our returning Lord shall come,
We wait thy welcome chariot wheels,
To bear our longing spirits home.

HYMN XLI.

Behold the Lamb of God.

1 BEHOLD the sin atoning Lamb!
With wonder, gratitude, and love,
To take away our guilt and shame,
See him descending from above!

2 Our sins and griefs on *him* were laid,
He meekly bore the mighty load;
Our ransom-price, he fully paid
In groans and tears,—in sweat and blood.

3 To save his church, behold he dies,
Mourners! regard this bleeding Lamb,
To him lift up your longing eyes,
And hope for mercy in his name.

4 Pardon and peace thro' him abound,
He can the richest blessings give;
Salvation in his name is found;
He bids the dying sinner live.

5 Jesus, my Lord! I look to thee
Where else can helpless mortals go?
Thy boundless love shall set me free,
From all my wretchedness and woe.

HYMN XLII.

Christ Suffered.——Gibbon's.

1 OH! Lord when faith with steady eyes,
Beholds thy wondrous sacrifice;
Love rises, to an ardent flame,
And we all other hope disdain.

2 With cold affections who can see
The thorns, the scourge, the nails, the tree,
The flowing tears, the crimson sweat,
The bleeding hands, and head and feet.

3 Jesus! what millions of our race,
Have been the triumphs of thy grace;
And millions more to thee shall fly,
And on thy sacrifice rely.

4 The sorrow, shame, and death were *thine*,
And all the stores of wrath divine;
Ours are the pardon, life, and bliss;
What love can be compar'd to this?

HYMN XLIII.

Christ's Death and Resurrection.—Acts ii. 32—36.——Steele.

1 COME tune ye saints, your noblest strains,
Your dying, rising Lord to sing;
And echo to the heav'nly plains,
The triumphs of your Saviour—King.

2 In songs of grateful rapture tell,
How he subdu'd your potent foes;
Subdu'd the pow'rs of death and hell,
And dying—finish'd all your woes.

3 Then to his glorious throne on high,
Return'd while hymning angels round,
Thro' the bright arches of the sky,
The God—the conqu'ring God, resound.

4 Almighty love, victorious pow'r,
Not angel-tongues can e'er display,
The wonders of that dreadful hour,
The joys, of that illustrious day.

5 Then well may mortals try in vain,
In vain their feeble voices raise;
Yet Jesus hears the humble strain,
And kindly owns our wish to praise.

6 Dear Saviour! let thy wondrous grace,
Fill ev'ry heart, and ev'ry tongue,
Till the full glories of thy face,
Inspire a sweeter, nobler song.

HYMN XLIV.

Surrender of the heart to Christ.—Phil. ii. 10.——Steele.

1 JESUS! in thy transporting name,
What blissful glories rise;

Jesus!—the angels sweetest theme,
The wonder of the skies.

2 Well might all heav'n with wonder view,
A love so strange as thine;
No thought of angels ever knew
Compassion so divine.

3 Dear Lord! and didst thou leave the sky
For penury and woes?
And didst thou bleed, and groan, and die,
For vile rebellious foes?

4 Victorious love! can language tell
The wonders of thy pow'r?
Which conquer'd all the force of hell,
In that tremendous hour.

5 What glad return can I impart,
For favours so divine;
Oh take my heart,—this worthless heart,
And make it only thine.

HYMN XLV.

The return of a Communion season, delightful.—Original.

1 HOW welcome my Saviour! how welcome to me,
The season of once more communing with thee;
But ah, when thy presence is hid, or withdrawn,
My heart is depress'd, and my comfort is gone;
If I see at thy table, one glimpse of thy face,
My heart is refresh'd, and renew'd by thy grace;
For grace so consoling,—so truly divine,
The oft'ner beheld, seems the brighter to shine.

2 To sit at the feet of my Saviour, I'd choose,
And crowns for his sake, I would gladly refuse;
Not all the enjoyments of nature, would seem
To me, of least value, if banish'd from him;
For all my best hopes on the Saviour repose,
And without him, my bosom no happiness knows;
Then make me,—Oh blessed Redeemer, but thine,
And earths highest pleasures, I freely resign.

3 While by faith, I can feast on the flesh of my Lord,
Or drink of his *blood*,—of his *Spirit and Word*;

With a heart full of hope, and with eyes bath'd in tears,
I forget all my sorrows, I lose all my cares;
Then blotted from mem'ry, and banish'd from sight,
Begone ev'ry earth-born,—unhallow'd delight;
Come blessed Immanu'l, thy presence impart,
Accept my best tribute—accept my *whole* heart.

HYMN XLVI.

Christ our Forerunner.—Heb. vi. 20.——Medly.

1 FAR, far beyond these lower skies,
Array'd in glories all his own;
Which faith, as thro' a glass descries,
There JESUS our forerunner 's gone.

2 Amidst the shining hosts above,
Immortal bliss his presence gives;
Where all is wonder, joy, and love;
There, JESUS our forerunner lives.

3 High on his throne of heav'nly light,
Eternal glory he sustains;
While saints and angels, bless the sight,
There JESUS our forerunner reigns.

4 There, brighter than ten thousand stars,
A radiant crown, his head entwines;
And tho' a human form he wears,
As our forerunner, there he shines.

5 Before his heav'nly Father's face,
For ev'ry saint, he intercedes;
And with infallible success.
There, JESUS our forerunner pleads.

6 But, Oh 'tis this completes the whole,
And all its bliss and glory proves;
That while eternal ages roll,
There, JESUS our forerunner lives.

HYMN XLVII.

Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better.—Phil. ii. 23.——Original.

1 YES!—"it is better to depart,
And be with Christ," in realms above;
Than here to linger,—where the heart,
No unpolluted joy can prove.

2 "'Tis better to depart, and be
With Christ," beyond the reach of pain;
Than exil'd from our home, to see
Our whole sad "three-score years and ten."

3 'Tis better far, to quit this scene
Of partial bliss, and real woe:
And freed from wretchedness and sin,
To heav'ns unclouded glories, go.

4 Tho' we have met around his board,
And gaz'd, and wonder'd at his love;
'Tis better to behold our Lord,
Enthron'd in majesty above.

5 Oh blessed hope! transporting sight!
HIS face to see,—with HIM to live;
'Twill yield more exquisite delight,
Than kings enjoy,—than earth can give.

6 Let but Immanuel speak the word,
The spirit quits her house of clay,
And soars triumphant to her Lord;
To bliss that never shall decay.

HYMN XLVIII.

Christ our Guide.—Psalm xlviii. 14.——Robinson.

1 GUIDE me, Oh thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro' this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me by thy pow'rful hand.
Bread of heav'n,
Feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the chrystal fountain,
Whence the healing waters flow;

Let the cloudy,—fiery pillar,
Lead me all the journey through.
Strong Deliv'rer!
Be thou still my strength, and shield.

3 Feed me with the heav'nly Manna,
In this barren wilderness;
Be my sword, and shield, and banner,
Be my robe of righteousness.
Fight and conquer,
All my foes, by sov'reign grace.

4 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Foe to death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe, on Canaan's side.
Thanks and praises,
Ever will I give to thee.

HYMN XLIX.

Bless the Lord all his works—in all places of his Dominion. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul!—Psalm ciii. 22.——Cowper.

1 *WINTER* has a joy for me,
While the Saviour's charms I read;
Lowly—meek—from blemish free,
In the snow-drop's pensive head.

2 *Spring* returns, and brings along,
Life invigorating strains.
Hark the Turtle's plaintive song,
Seems to speak his dying groans.

3 *Summer* has a thousand charms,
All expressive of his worth;
'Tis *his* Sun that lights and warms,
'Tis *his* air that cools the earth.

What has *autumn* left to say?
Nothing of a Saviour's grace?
Yes—the milder beams of day,
Tell me of his smiling face.

5 Light appears with *early dawn*,
While the sun makes haste to rise;
See his bleeding beauties drawn,
On the blushes of the skies.

6 *Ev'ning* with a silent pace,
Slowly moving from the west;
Shows an emblem of his grace,—
Points to an Eternal rest.

HYMN L.

My times are in thy hand.—Psalm ——Original.

1 HOW transient is this life!
How swift our moments fly,
Bearing us down times rapid stream,
To dread Eternity.

2 How frail this mortal bark,
That floats us down that stream;
Life's but a perishable flow'r,
A shadow, and a dream.

3 Our "times are in thy hand,"
Oh thou Eternal pow'r!
Withdraw thine all supporting aid,
We perish in an hour.

4 How should we then improve,
Our few and fleeting days;
Spend them in daily acts of love,
Of worship and of praise.

5 Then let the moment come,
That summons us to die;
We quit this transient,—mortal scene,
For endless joys on high.

HYMN LI.

Prayer of a Believer, after Communion.—Original.

1 OH for an ardent faith,
A stedfast trust in God!
To soften life's harrassing cares,
And smoothe its rugged road.

2 Oh for a grateful heart!
A patient—humble mind;
To heav'n, submissive and devout,
To man,—sincere and kind.

3 Spirit of love and peace!
Descend and fill this heart;
Bid ev'ry rising murmur cease,
And ev'ry doubt depart.

4 Pour on this darken'd mind,
Thy soul-reviving rays;
Then shall my lips proclaim my joy,
And all my life be praise.

5 Then will this bosom glow,
With extasy and love,
And faith and hope, on angel-wing
Aspire to joys above.

HYMN LII.

For me to die is Gain.——Original.

1 THEE I adore, Eternal pow'r!
And humbly bow before thy throne;
Be near me at my dying hour,
Then shed thy kindest influence down.

2 My sins, most humbly I confess,
Sins against gospel light and love;
Oh let thy sov'reign—pard'ning grace,
Those sins forgive—my guilt remove.

3 Jesus! on thine atoning blood,
My fondest—firmest hopes depend;
In ev'ry trial, Oh my God!
Thy heav'nly consolations lend.

4 With thee,—Redeemer of my soul!
Let not the world my heart divide;
Each rash,—unhallow'd thought controul,
And to thyself, my footsteps guide.

5 On thy dear bosom may I lie,
When sinking in the arms of death;
To thee direct my closing eye,
And praise thee with my latest breath.

FINIS.

DEC 18 1928